

VOL. I. No. 1

1924

THE
CALL OF EDUCATION

L'APPEL
DE L'ÉDUCATION

LA CHIAMATA
DELL'EDUCAZIONE



Psycho-Pedagogical Journal
International Organ of the Montessori Movement

EDITED

by

Dr MARIA MONTESSORI

WITH THE COOPERATION OF

PROF. Dr GÉZA RÉVÉSZ AND Dr J.C.L. GODEFROY



CONTENTS AND PRICE: SEE INSIDE COVER

Publisher: H. J. PARIS Amsterdam

THE CALL OF EDUCATION

Edited by Dr MARIA MONTESSORI

with the Coöperation of

PROF. Dr. GÉZA RÉVÉSZ and Dr. J. C. L. GODEFROY.

Sub-Editors :

Mrs. P. Smart, *America*; Miss L. E. Roubiczek, *Austria*; Comtesse V. Sforza, *Belgium*; Dr. Christo Neguentsov, *Bulgaria*; Prof. A. Franca, *Brazil*; Dr. Hiang-Kan-Hu, *China*; Mrs. Sheila Radice; C. A. Bang, O. B. E., *England*; Melle M. Cromwell, *France*; Dr. F. Hilker, *Germany*; Prof. M. Fancello, *Italy*; Mme C. d'Ergin Caterinici, *Roumania and Greece*; Dr. Juan Alzina; R. Araluce, *Spain*; Prof. Ad. Ferriere; Melle Bontempi, *Switzerland*.

It is intended to issue 4 numbers of the periodical yearly, each containing about 50 pages.

The Contents will fall under the following headings :

1. Scientific Articles.
2. The Psychology of the Child ; observations of development.
3. Practical help to teachers.
4. Results in the Schools.
5. Replies to questions on the Montessori Method.
6. Articles on Social problems in the light of the method.
7. International News of the Movement, Statistics, etc.
8. Literature and art for children, etc.
9. Contributions from the children (drawings, compositions etc.)
10. Illustrations.

Editorial Communications should be addressed to the Central Editorial Office:

Roemer Visscherstraat 14, Amsterdam, Holland,
or to the editors:

Prof. Dr. G. Révész, Keizersgracht 283, Amsterdam; Dr. J. C. L. Godefroy, Roemer Visscherstraat 14, Amsterdam.

Writers of published articles are alone responsible for opinions therein expressed.

Copyright for all articles reserved.

Annual Subscription (payable strictly in advance) Post free:

Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain	10 sh.
Holland	f 5.50
Dutch India	6.—
U. S. A., Canada and S. America	\$ 2.25
Other Countries	10 sh.
Single copies	3 sh.

Remittances, changes of address, complaints etc. should be sent to the *Administration*: R. van Mill, Willemsparkweg 151, Amsterdam, Holland.

Copies lost in transit will not be replaced free of charge, unless lost through the fault of the publishers.

CONTENTS

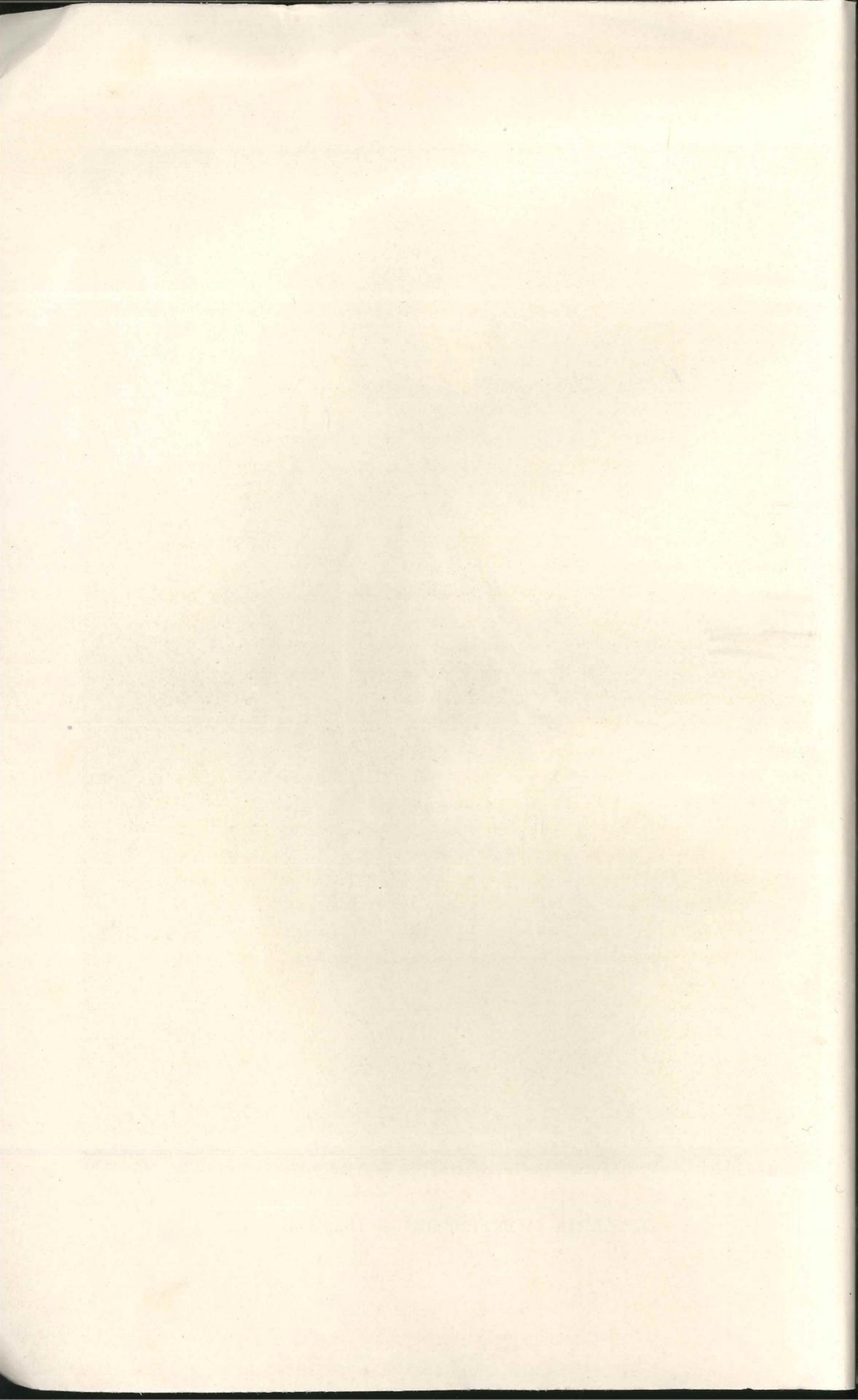
1. *La Chiamata* }
The Call } Dr. M. MONTESSORI.
L' Appel }
2. *Quelques Perspectives* }
Perspectives } . . . Dr. J. C. L. GODEFROY.
3. *Introductory Note* }
Introduction } Prof. Dr. GÉZA RÉVÉSZ.
4. *Why is the Montessori Method*
a Science? C. A. CLAREMONT B. Sc.
5. *L'Observation des tout-petits.*
A study of very little children . . . Dr. M. MONTESSORI.
6. *A propos de la composition*
chez les enfants A. MACCHERONI.
7. *Questions relating to the develop-*
ment of the Social life in the
M.school, answered by . . . Dr. M. MONTESSORI.
8. *Echos de nos écoles et de la*
famille.
9. *International News of the Move-*
ment.
a. A review of the Montessori
movement in England.
b. Dr. M. Montessori-
Hon. Doct. Litt.
c. Training Courses held by
Dr. Montessori in 1923.
10. *Literature and art for children.*
"Titania's Palace" Major Sir NEVILE WILKINSON
K. C. V. O.

In addition to articles by the editors in the different countries, "The Call of Education" has received contributions from:
Dr. A. Adler, Vienna; Dr. A. Droogleever Fortuyn, Univ. of Leyden; Prof. Dr. G. A. Jaederholm, Univ. of Göteborg; Prof. Dr. D. Katz, Univ. of Rostock; Prof. Dr. K. Koffka, Univ. of Giessen; Prof. Dr. O. Lipmann, Berlin; Prof. Dr. W. Peters, Univ. of Jena; Signa A. Maccheroni; Prof. Dr. W. Stern, Univ. of Hamburg; Prof. J. R. Thompson, Queens Univ. of Belfast; Prof. Dr. E. Weszely, Univ. of Pécs, etc.



Swaine, 146. New Bond St. W. and at Southsea.

DR MARIA MONTESSORI — Hon. Doct. Litt.



„La Chiamata”

Dr. MARIA MONTESSORI.

Il titolo scelto per il periodico che oggi presentiamo al pubblico indica il nostro proposito. Esso non è soltanto l'organizzazione d'innunerevoli forze sparse in ogni parte del mondo, le forze cioè degli apostoli della nostra idea; nè solo il mezzo di aiutare le maestre che dirigono scuole montessoriane senza sufficiente preparazione. Il nostro scopo va al di là, infine, della utilità del movimento educativo che da oltre quindici anni si è andato sviluppando.

Concentrando in un periodico i lavori sparsi di tanti che seguono, servono, e osservano l'anima dei bambini fatti liberi col nostro metodo d'educazione, noi vogliamo farne una forza viva, che rappresenti una chiamata a tutti quelli che sentano oggi le difficoltà del momento che attraversiamo.

Fra tanti tentativi di condurre alla ricostruzione la società, manca tuttora quello che si rivolge direttamente all'anima umana.

Una possibilità nuova di liberare l'anima del bambino dagli ostacoli che ne impediscono il pieno sviluppo, ci ha permesso di vedere „l'uomo” sotto altro aspetto da quello finora conosciuto; noi abbiamo veduto, nelle nostre scuole, „un nuovo bambino”, che apparisce come la soluzione spontanea di profondi problemi aventi ripercussione sulla salute mentale e sulla formazione del carattere. I risultati che si sono realizzati ripetutamente con ampia e lunga esperienza applicando lo stesso metodo educativo sui bambini di quasi tutte le razze umane che hanno qualche connessione con la nostra civiltà, sono una rivelazione, o se si vuole un insegnamento che esorbita per la sua importanza, dai limiti della scuola. Noi abbiamo dimostrato

gli errori della passata educazione, rendendo possibile l'educazione nuova; e nessuna prova più dimostrativa può esistere dell'errore, che vederne in atto la correzione, e constatarne i risultati.

Sulla psicologia del bambino si era diffusa una enorme quantità di errate interpretazioni in ogni classe di persone colte ed incolte: „Si rappresentava con essi l'infanzia dell' „uomo fallito” nelle finalità a cui era stato creato: l'uomo di scarsa volontà complicato nella sua coscienza, ignoto a se stesso incapace di esprimersi, inadeguato allo sforzo consueto, agitato e sofferente, pronto ad essere trascinato da una forza maggiore di lui, senza distinguere il bene dal male, cioè le vie di salvezza da quelle di perdizione. L'uomo di oggi ha una profonda illusione di civiltà e di forza, ma è veramente sopraffatto dall'ambiente che si è evoluto; e l'uomo proietta su questo ambiente l'illusione che viene dal vuoto rimasto in lui stesso. Egli ha sviluppato molto l'intelligenza meccanica nel creare gli oggetti e si compiace nel vederli agire invece di lui; ma ha lasciato nell'inerzia le forze vitali fondamentali. L'inerzia distruttrice delle energie creative, ha realmente respinto gli uomini d'oggi nei gradi oscuri e molteplici dell'arresto di sviluppo. Le creazioni meccaniche dell'intelligenza distaccata dalle sue fonti illuminatrici hanno costruito enormi ostacoli lungo il cammino della vita superiore. E' come una ricca, brillante e preziosa pianta di corallo dalle innumerevoli ramificazioni; ma il bel corallo è elaborato dalla superficie di un piccolo essere mollo e nascosto, fatto prigioniero dal suo stesso lavoro. Il bambino finora conosciuto è il primo stadio di quel tipo di uomo che sacrificò il proprio sviluppo a quello dell'ambiente. La sua storia è infatti, a chi può comprenderla nella luce che viene dalla nostra esperienza, la storia di un sacrificio lento e continuato delle interiore energie dell'uomo, al trionfo delle cose esteriori.

Dall'educazione si attende una completa rivoluzione che cambi la posizione dell'uomo: lo spirito creatore dell' individualità umana deve ascendere come un dominatore, nella scala dei valori.

*

I caratteri del „vecchio bambino” conosciuti come i caratteri

infantili, normali, sono in grande maggioranza manifestazioni di „difesa” o espressioni di „decadimento spirituale” sopravvenuto perchè l'ambiente non offri i mezzi fundamentalmente necessari a svolgere le più profonde energie. I biologi hanno studiato i caratteri di difesa delle piante e degli animali, e perfino dei tessuti organici, ma il campo è ancora quasi inesplorato per la psicologia infantile normale. I caratteri difensivi e decadenti si possano paragonare alla tempesta superficiale delle acque del mare sollevate da venti contrari. Cioè esistano nei bambini manifestazioni superficiali che sono in rapporto con le difficoltà, „gli ostacoli” presentati da un ambiente inadeguato. Lo „sforzo” sparso così alla superficie in inutile difesa, rende inerte le energie profonde, che sarebbero pronte a svolgere quell'attività formativa necessaria allo splendido sviluppo spirituale dell'uomo; e che fa decadere nell'inerzia le stesse sorgenti del potere umano. Quasi tutte queste manifestazioni superficiali provocate, sono oggi conosciute come caratteri della mentalità infantile; e così l'intelligenza rimane abbandonata a se stessa nell'epoca più delicata della crescita, quando condizioni esterne adatte potrebbero permettere la sua forte costruzione. La instabilità dell'attenzione, la impossibilità di un esercizio costante che sia vero lavoro, e quindi l'abbandono al giuoco e all'ozio dei giuocattoli; il fantasticare vano che empie d'illusione la mente immatura e tenera, e fa costruire al piccolo bambino il „bel mondo della sua così detta immaginazione” l'incapacità di coordinare i movimenti a scopi utili, (esagerata dal falso aiuto dell'adulto che agisce in tutto pel bambino), e che sprofonda la preziosa energia vitale dell'infanzia nel disordine dei movimenti, aprendo le vie a esplosioni convulsive (accessi di rabbia) sono oggi generalmente il „quadro della vita iniziale” dell'uomo.

Sono inglobati a quelle caratteristiche dell'intelligenza, i caratteri morali: l'egoismo, l'eccessiva passione alla proprietà di cose materiali, che porta i bimbi al litigio e alla reciproca offesa; la prevalenza dei bisogni della vita vegetativa, la bugia, la paura del buio, la timidezza, la disobbedienza, i capricci. Tutte queste manifestazioni sono „naturali e normali”, solo perchè

e naturale e normale la difesa. Ma appartengono senza eccezione „alla superficie dell'anima." La difesa contro gli ostacoli non è diretta, e per questo il carattere difensivo delle manifestazioni infantili rimase per tanto tempo oscuro o inavvertito. Il bimbo non è un combattente conscio, che miri volontariamente a superare gli ostacoli. Egli inconsciamente ha un istinto supremo di difesa — egli difende le profondità del suo spirito e le „nasconde" ricoprendole; come una sensitiva ritira le foglioline a un tocco esterno. Tutto quanto ha l'uomo di bello e di grande rimane così represso, come una riserva che forse gli resterà nascosta per tutta la vita. Così la personalità è e rimane una *incognita*.

Considerando l'educazione sotto questo aspetto, il suo problema risiede nel porgere all'anima infantile „un ambiente privo di ostacoli." I caratteri di difesa spariscono allora tutti insieme, come le onde numerose del mare agitato cessano al quietarsi dei venti contrari. E le profondità dell'anima cominciano a manifestarsi.

La scuola è diventata così oggi, per noi, ciò che alcuni scienziati moderni potrebbero chiamare un „campo sperimentale" di coltivazione delle attività infantili superiori. In questo campo vengono tolti gli ostacoli maggiori che deprimono oggi generalmente l'anima dei bambini. Quando cominciano le manifestazioni più profonde e nascoste a rivelarsi, esse ci indicano indirettamente ostacoli sempre più fini e condizioni di vita sempre più precise. In questa nuova interpretazione psicologica, e nella ricerca pratica di condizioni dell'ambiente sempre più perfette, può consistere il maggiore interesse degli scienziati positivisti.

I cultori della psicoanalisi potrebbero interessarsi (come alcuni di essi già fanno) a penetrare verso le origini, quei fenomeni patologici che essi vincono nei loro pazienti, richiamando dai misteri dell'inconscio le cause latenti di tante debolezze umane e aprendo loro le vie verso l'aperta coscienza. Le nostre scuole che permettono al bambino „la libera scelta" e la „libera espressione" in un ambiente privo di ostacoli, dove il principale

ostacolo, cioè la forza dell'adulto, è trasformato in una guida a raggiungere l'indipendenza — devono interessare gli scienziati come l'igiene pratica delle „malattie dell'anima.“

Coloro poi che hanno sentito in se stessi la vita spirituale e il suo valore — e che già sono pratici e praticanti — sulla distinzione tra le due nature dell' uomo, e nella ricerca della natura superiore, vedranno nelle nostre scuole un'opera *di amore*. L'amore comprende al di là delle apparenze esterne, bisogni imperiosi e fondamentali, [difficili ad esprimere — e dai quali pur dipende tutta la vita. L'amore ci conduce a costruire „il ricovero“ a questó bambino incompreso nella sua parte divina, per far libere le vie al suo sviluppo spirituale.

Ma anche chi si sofferma alla più superficiale osservazione dei fatti, e vede una scuola armoniosa nella sua semplicità, dove i bambini lavorano senza stancarsi — fortificando visibilmente il loro carattere — ; senza che la maestra intervenga a insegnare o a correggere, deve essere colpito dal fatto nuovo che il bambino si è attaccato a una sorgente direttiva interiore — anzichè rimanere attaccato alla volontà del maestro che lo spinge avanti. Questo è il fatto nuovo, che può far riflettere anche sopra la [possibilità pratica di una riforma sociale. L'uomo che „s'interessa al predominio della sua natura superiore“ sulla natura inferiore — è entrato in una via di pace, che invano si cercherà nel mondo, finchè gli uomini si interesseranno al predominio degli uni sugli altri,

„The Call”

by

Dr. MARIA MONTESSORI.

Translated by Sheila Radice.

The title chosen for this journal indicates the scope of our enterprise. We aim not only at organising a great number of forces scattered all over the world — the forces, that is to say, of the many apostles of the Montessori idea. Our intention is not only to help teachers who, without sufficient training, are directing Montessori schools. Our scope is wider — as wide, in fact, as the great movement which has been developing throughout the field of education for over fifteen years.

It is hoped, in this journal, to concentrate into one channel the scattered efforts of many who follow, serve, and observe the child-spirit as liberated by our method of education. It will, we hope, be a living power, and a call to many who are oppressed by the difficulties of the times, through which we are passing.

Among many movements for social reconstruction which we see around us, few have any direct bearing upon the soul of man. The means, now discovered, of liberating the child's soul from bonds, which have hitherto prevented it from developing freely, now show us man under a new aspect. The „new child” whom we see in our schools solves automatically many of the profoundest problems of mental health and character-formation. Results which have been obtained again and again in the course of long and varied experience in application of the same methods to children of almost all civilised and semi-civilised races, constitute a veritable revelation. The lesson they teach is of an importance far transcending the limits of the school. The new

education now made possible shows up, what have been the errors of education in the past, for errors are nowhere seen more clearly than through the results of their correction.

An enormous body of mistaken doctrine concerning the minds and behaviour of children has been current in all classes of people, at all levels of culture. In our ignorance, we have represented to ourselves man as a failure, in a finality imposed upon him by the hand of his Creator. We have conceived of him as a creature of weak will and befogged consciousness, incapable of understanding himself or of making the efforts necessary for his own well-being; troubled and suffering; a prey to forces stronger than himself; incapable of distinguishing good from evil, or the way of salvation from that of perdition.

The fact is that man, who has surrounded himself with a vast simulacrum of civilisation and power, is overwhelmed by the environment which he has evolved. He has projected into his environment a hollowness, an emptiness, which in fact exists within himself. Having developed to a high pitch his mechanical intelligence, he stands by and watches the things which he has made functioning in his stead; his own fundamental powers remaining, in the meanwhile, in a state of inertia. This disastrous paralysis of the creative energies drives man back into the many obscure and complex stages which mark the arrest of mental development. The mechanical achievements of his intelligence, detached from the inward sources of illumination, become so many obstacles blocking up the path of the higher life. We see, as it were, a magnificent coral reef, branched and intricate, which is being built up from the surface by small weak creatures enslaved and imprisoned by their own labours.

The child we have hitherto known is the first stage of the man whose personal development is being sacrificed to that of his environment. In the light of our experience we read his story as the story of a slow and continued sacrifice of man's best powers, which are being dragged at the chariot wheel of things external. The task that lies before education today is a reversal of man's position, so that in our scale of va-

lues the creative individual spirit again may become dominant.

*

The characteristics of the "old child", which have come to be considered the normal characteristics of infancy, are defensive manifestations and symptoms of spiritual decadence brought about by an environment which does not encourage human development in its profounder sense. Biologists have studied the mechanisms of defence in plants and animals, and even in organic tissues, but in respect of child-psychology the field is almost entirely unexplored. Defensive and decadent characteristics are like a temporary disturbance of the sea's surface by conflicting winds. Many of the phenomena which we commonly see in children are only a ruffling of the surface, brought about by the difficulties and obstacles of an inadequate and unsuitable environment. But so long as we allow superficial energy to be wasted in this kind of unnecessary defence, we render inert those profounder energies which, through all kinds of formative activity, bring about man's spiritual development. Since the superficial characteristics induced in children have come to be regarded as typical of child-mentality, it has come about that the child mind has been left to itself in the most critical period of growth, when the right external conditions would have helped it to build itself up upon a strong foundation. Believing the child to be naturally afflicted with wandering attention, with inability to concentrate and repugnance to work, we have abandoned him to games and idle toys, and left him to weave fantasies and fill with illusions his immature and tender mind. We exaggerate his inability to coordinate his movements to useful ends by helping him unnecessarily, doing everything for him. We allow the precious vital energy of childhood to be lost in disorderly activity, often the precursor of wild excitement and accesses of rage. Such is the common picture of man in the opening stages of his life.

Bound up with these phenomena of undeveloped and undeveloping intelligence are the moral phenomena of egoism and that love of possession, which makes children quarrel and incite one another to wrath. They are obsessed with the physical needs

of daily life, they lie, fear the dark, are timid, disobedient, capricious. These manifestations are natural and normal only in so far as defence is natural and normal. They belong, without exception, to the mere surface of the soul. Since the reaction to an obstacle is never direct or obvious, the defensive character of these infantile manifestations escapes us. The child is not a conscious combatant, marshalling his forces to overcome the obstacles in his path. His instinct of defence, though supreme, is unconscious: he hides up the depths of his soul, shrinking in upon himself, as a sensitive plant folds up its leaflets at a touch. So the beauty and grandeur of the human soul remains suppressed, and may be hidden for the whole of a human life: the true personality remaining unknown.

If we look upon education in this light, we shall see that its problem consists in providing for the child's soul an environment freed from obstacles. When this is done, the defensive phenomena, which we have described, disappear all together, as the many waves of the sea disappear at the dropping of the wind. And then the depths of the soul begin to reveal themselves.

The school, as we understand it, may be looked upon as a scientific experimental field in which children's higher faculties are cultivated. For this purpose we remove as many as possible of the common obstacles which hinder children's progress. As the deep springs of childnature begin to flow, the child himself indicates the more obscure obstacles, and lays down for himself conditions of life more precise, than we could plan for him.

The scientist, who is also a positivist, will find absorbing interest in this new field of psychology, and research after constantly more perfect conditions of growth. Many who are interested in analytical psychology aim at penetrating the origins of pathological phenomena, which they endeavour to relieve by recalling out of the unconscious the latent causes of human weakness, and making the individual more completely conscious. Such will find light in our schools, where the children have free choice and free expression in an environment free of obstacles, where the

major hindrance, the dominating adult, becomes the child's guide towards independence.

Those whose interest is in spiritual values, who seek after the highest that is in man, will recognise in our schools a work of love. Love looking beneath external appearances, understands many needs in the child, which are imperious and fundamental. These needs may be obscure and difficult to express, yet on them life depends. Love leads us to make a refuge for the divine side of child-nature, disregarded, misunderstood, and to open up the way for his spiritual development.

Even those who stop at superficial observation of facts will see here a school harmonious in its simplicity, where children work unwearyingly, visibly building up characters without the teacher's correction or interference. Such observers will be struck by a feature new to schools, for the child is actuated by an inner directing power, no longer by the will of the teacher driving him on. Here lies the germ of a great social reform. For the man who is engaged in dominating himself has his feet set in a way of peace, sought in vain in a world where men's chief interest is in the domination of one another.

„L'Appel”

par

Dr. MARIA MONTESSORI.

Le titre choisi pour le Périodique que nous présentons aujourd'hui au public montre notre dessein. Ce n'est pas seulement l'organisation des forces innombrables dispersées par le monde, savoir des forces des apôtres de notre idée, ni seulement le moyen d'aider les maîtresses qui sans préparation suffisante dirigent des écoles montessoriennes. Notre but, en fin de compte, va au de là de l'utilité du mouvement éducateur dont le développement, depuis plus de quinze ans, est allé toujours grandissant.

En réunissant dans un Périodique les travaux épars de tant

de personnes qui suivent, servent et observent l'âme des enfants rendus libres par notre méthode d'éducation, nous voulons en faire une force vive et représentative, un appel à tous ceux qui sentent aujourd'hui les difficultés du moment que nous traversons.

Et à tant de tentatives de conduire à la reconstruction de la société, manque toujours celle qui s'adresse directement à l'âme humaine.

Une nouvelle possibilité de libérer l'âme de l'enfant des obstacles, qui en empêchent le plein développement, nous a permis de voir l'homme sous un aspect différent de celui connu jusqu'ici ; nous avons vu, dans nos écoles, „*un nouvel enfant*“, qui apparaît comme la solution spontanée de profonds problèmes ayant une répercussion sur la santé mentale et sur la formation du caractère. Les conditions nouvelles, réalisées par nous à plusieurs reprises avec une ample et longue expérience sur presque toutes les races humaines ayant quelque rapport avec notre civilisation, sont une révélation ou, si l'on veut, un enseignement qui, par son importance, dépasse les limites de l'école. Nous avons démontré les erreurs de l'éducation ancienne, en rendant possible la nouvelle éducation, et il ne peut exister aucune preuve plus démonstrative de l'erreur que d'en voir la correction dans la pratique et d'en constater les résultats.

Sur la psychologie de l'enfant s'était répandue dans toute catégorie d'esprits cultivés et non cultivés une énorme quantité d'interprétations erronées.

On représentait avec elles l'enfance de „l'homme failli“ dans la finalité pour laquelle il avait été créé : l'homme de peu de volonté, compliqué dans sa conscience, inconnu de lui-même, incapable de s'exprimer, impropre à l'effort habituel, agité et souffrant, prompt à se laisser entraîner par une force plus grande que lui, sans distinguer le bien du mal, c'est-à-dire les voies du salut d'avec celles de la perdition. L'homme d'aujourd'hui s'illusionne profondément et sur sa civilisation et sur sa force ; mais en vérité il est vaincu par le milieu, qu'il s'est créé, et l'homme projette sur ce milieu l'illusion, qui vient du

vide resté en lui-même. Il a développé beaucoup l'intelligence mécanique en créant les objets et se complaît à les voir agir à sa place ; mais il a laissé inertes les forces vitales fondamentales. L'inertie destructrice des énergies créatrices a réellement repoussé les hommes d'aujourd'hui à ces phases obscures et multiples, qui caractérisent l'arrêt du développement. Les créations mécaniques de l'intelligence, séparées des sources qui les illuminent, ont produit d'énormes obstacles sur la voie qui mène à la vie supérieure. C'est comme un riche, brillant et précieux végétal corallien aux ramifications innombrables : mais le beau corail est élaboré en partant de la surface d'un petit être flasque et dissimule, rendu prisonnier par son propre travail. L'enfant connu jusqu'ici est le premier degré de ce type d'homme, qui sacrifie son propre développement à celui du milieu. Son histoire est en effet, pour qui peut la comprendre à la lumière qui vient de notre expérience, l'histoire d'un sacrifice lent et continu des énergies intérieures de l'homme, fait au triomphe des choses externes.

C'est de l'éducation qu'on attend une complète révolution susceptible de changer la position de l'homme : l'esprit créateur de l'individualité humaine doit s'élever victorieux et dominateur sur l'échelle des valeurs.

*

Les caractères de „l'ancien enfant” connus comme caractères puériles normaux sont pour la plupart des manifestations de „défense” et des expressions de „déclin spirituel” survenu, parce que le milieu n'est pas de nature à offrir les moyens essentiellement nécessaires au développement des énergies les plus profondes. Les biologistes ont étudié les caractères de défense des plantes et des animaux, voire des tissus organiques, mais le champ est encore presque inexploré pour ce qui est de la psychologie puérile normale. Les caractères de défense et de déclin peuvent se comparer à la tempête, qui fait rage à la surface des eaux de la mer, soulevées par des vents contraires. C'est-à-dire, il existe chez les enfants des manifestations superficielles, qui sont en rapport avec les difficultés, „les ob-

stacles" offerts par un milieu impropre. L'„effort" éparpillé ainsi à la surface en inutile défense rend inertes les énergies profondes, qui seraient promptes à développer cette activité formatrice nécessaire au splendide développement spirituel de l'homme et qui fait tomber dans l'inertie les mêmes sources du pouvoir humain. Presque toutes ces manifestations superficielles provoquées sont aujourd'hui connues comme caractères de la mentalité puérile, et ainsi l'intelligence reste abandonnée à elle-même à l'époque la plus délicate de la croissance, alors que de convenables conditions externes pourraient lui permettre de se constituer solidement. L'instabilité de l'attention, l'impossibilité d'un exercice constant, qui soit un vrai travail et par conséquent l'abandon au jeu et à l'oisiveté des jouets, la rêvasserie vaine qui remplit d'illusions l'esprit pas encore mûr et tendre et fait construire au petit enfant le „beau monde de sa soi-disant imagination", l'incapacité de coördonner les mouvements ¹⁾ en vue de buts utiles et qui précipite la précieuse énergie vitale de l'enfance dans le désordre des mouvements, ouvrant les voies à des explosions convulsives (accès de rage) — voilà le „tableau de la vie initiale" de l'homme en général, tel qu'on peut le tracer de nos jours.

Dans cette description d'ensemble de l'intelligence sont compris les caractères moraux: l'égoïsme, la passion excessive de la propriété des choses matérielles, qui porte les enfants à la querelle et à l'offense réciproque, la prépondérance des besoins de la vie végétative, le mensonge, la peur de l'obscurité, la timidité, la désobéissance, les caprices. Toutes ces manifestations sont „naturelles et normales" seulement parce que la défense est quelque chose de naturel et de normal. Mais elles appartiennent sans exception „à la surface de l'âme". La défense contre les obstacles n'est pas directe et pour cette raison le caractère défensif des manifestations puériles resta si longtemps obscur et inaperçu. L'enfant n'est pas un combattant conscient qui volontairement prétend à surmonter les ob-

¹⁾ Cette incapacité se trouve exagérée par le faux secours de l'adulte agissant en toute chose travers l'enfant.

stacles. C'est à son insu qu'il a un instinct suprême de défense—il défend les profondeurs de son esprit et les „dissimule", en les recouvrant, comme une sensitive replie ses folioles au moindre attouchement externe. Tout ce que l'homme a de beau et de grand reste ainsi réprimé comme une réserve, qui peut-être lui restera cachée pendant toute sa vie. Ainsi la personnalité est et reste une *inconnue*.

En considérant l'éducation sous cet aspect, son problème consiste à offrir à l'âme puérile un milieu exempt d'„obstacles". Les caractères de défense disparaissent alors tous ensemble, comme les ondes nombreuses de la mer agitée se dispersent à l'accalmie des vents contraires. Et les profondeurs de l'âme commencent à se manifester.

Ainsi l'école est devenue de nos jours, pour nous, ce que quelques savants modernes pourraient appeler un „champ d'expériences", pour y cultiver les activités puériles supérieures. Dans ce champ, on enlève les obstacles majeurs qui dépriment à présent généralement l'âme des enfants. Lorsque les manifestations les plus profondes et cachées commencent à se produire, elles nous indiquent indirectement la présence d'obstacles toujours plus fins et de conditions de vie toujours plus précises. Dans cette nouvelle interprétation psychologique et dans la recherche pratique de conditions d'un milieu toujours plus parfait, peut consister l'attraction la plus grande pour les savants positivistes.

Les adeptes de l'analyse psychologique pourraient s'intéresser (comme quelques-uns d'entre eux le font déjà) à retracer jusqu' à leur source ces phénomènes pathologiques, dont ils triomphent chez leurs patients, en évoquant des mystères de l'inconscient les causes latentes de tant de faiblesses humaines et en leur ouvrant une issue vers la pleine conscience. Nos écoles qui permettent à l'enfant „le libre choix" et „la libre expression" dans un milieu exempt d'obstacles, où le principal obstacle, savoir la force de l'adulte, est transformé en un guide, qui mène à l'indépendance—doivent intéresser ces savants comme l'hygiène pratique des „maladies de l'âme".

Ensuite, ceux qui ont senti en eux-mêmes la vie spirituelle et sa valeur pour la distinction entre les deux natures de l'homme et pour l'aspiration à la nature supérieure—ceux à qui est déjà familière cette vie spirituelle et qui la pratiquent—reconnaîtront dans nos écoles une oeuvre d'amour. L'amour voit au delà des apparences externes des besoins impérieux et fondamentaux, difficiles à exprimer et dont dépend pourtant la vie entière. L'amour nous mène à construire „le refuge” à cet enfant incompris dans sa partie divine, pour déblayer les voies en vue de son développement spirituel.

Mais même celui qui s'arrête un peu à l'observation la plus superficielle, des faits et voit une école harmonieuse dans sa simplicité où les enfants travaillent sans se fatiguer et en fortifiant visiblement leur caractère, sans que la maîtresse intervienne soit pour enseigner soit pour corriger, doit être frappé du fait nouveau, que l'enfant s'est attaché à une source directrice jaillissant de son intérieur, au lieu de rester attaché à la volonté du maître, qui le pousse de l'avant. Voilà le fait nouveau, qui peut faire réfléchir aussi sur la possibilité pratique d'une réforme sociale. L'homme qui „s'intéresse à la prédominance de sa nature supérieure” sur la nature inférieure est entré dans une voie de paix qu'on cherchera en vain dans le monde, tant que les hommes s'intéresseront à la prédominance des uns sur les autres.

Quelques Perspectives

par

Dr. J. C. L. GODEFROY.

Qu'est-ce qui justifie la fondation d'une revue de pédagogie psychologique consacrée spécialement au développement de la méthode Montessori? Sans doute ceux qui ont des intérêts dans un des périodiques pédagogiques déjà existants se poseront cette question.

Or nous croyons qu'une pareille tendance qui en apparence

rétrécit l'effort pédagogique, a d'incontestables droits d'existence.

La plupart de ces revues proclament une conception toute contraire en tendant à élargir l'horizon, permettant aux différents courants d'exposer leurs théories. Cette conception certes est justifiable là où il s'agit d'institutions d'enseignement de peu d'extension et d'un terrain d'application restreint. La méthode Montessori au contraire est sortie de cette phase. Sa propagation rapide entier dans le monde a fait naître un impérieux besoin de centralisation, d'une organe qui pourra diriger tous. Ce besoin seul justifie déjà l'existence d'une organe, mais d'autres raisons plus profondes, dont je voudrais parler ici brièvement, s'y ajoutent.

Dans l'histoire de la culture le mouvement Montessori me paraît être un exemple presque unique d'un développement et d'une propagation extrêmement rapides d'une attitude de vie et d'une méthode de développement de l'âme et de l'intelligence de la jeune génération. On ne saurait s'expliquer ce fait que lorsqu'on conçoit, que la doctrine de Madame Montessori a réveillé en l'homme un sentiment, qui jusqu'à là vivait inconscient ou encore latent dans les coeurs, et qui n'attendait que le stimulant nécessaire pour prendre rapidement et fortement conscience de soi-même, pour faire naître des nouvelles tendances, en apparence brusquement écloses, aussi bien dans l'éducation que dans notre vie personnelle.

Pourtant on est embarrassé pour trouver une définition précise de ces principes nouveaux.

En examinant d'abord à quelles catégories sociales appartiennent les adhérents de Montessori, on constate que les courants et les races les plus divergents ont leurs représentants parmi eux. On y trouve notamment des Chrétiens et des Hindous, des catholiques et des protestants, des radicaux, des socialistes et des conservatifs, des Javanais, des Chinois, des Australiens, des Européens, avec leurs caractères nationaux divergents. Lorsqu'on demande à chacun d'eux ce qui les attire au fond vers la méthode Montessori, il paraît que c'est le plus souvent d'y rencontrer la réalisation de quelques-uns de leurs buts intimes et

personnels, de leurs propres idées favorites. Le fait que chacun y trouve ce qu'il cherche pour sa propre âme, prouve que les idées de Montessori font appel à des besoins universels de l'âme.

Considérant ensuite comment et à combien de points de vue ces gens diffèrent les uns des autres, on doit bien en arriver à conclure que ses idées s'appuient sur des fonctions primordiales, quoi qu'elles ne se montrent pas directement à la surface — de la conscience humaine, où elles font vibrer une corde intime jusqu'ici muette.

Mais cette réalité encore peu connue, demande une explication, exige d'être traitée plus amplement, d'une façon profonde et toute spéciale.

Alors il faut d'abord se mettre en rapport avec „les faits“, commencer par faire patiemment pendant quelques années des observations dans les endroits où actuellement des âmes d'enfants peuvent développer sans limitation leurs facultés ; là, où nous voyons se déployer librement et plus amplement qu'ailleurs non seulement les fonctions intellectuelles, mais avant tout les tendances subtiles esthétiques, émotionnelles et sociales du caractère. On s'apercevra alors que l'école Montessori est l'endroit par excellence, où de plus en plus on obtiendra un contact intime et intense à la fois avec les profondeurs de l'âme de l'enfant, et de là en dernière conséquence avec celle de tout homme.

Enfin l'observateur traverse et éprouve ici la genèse et le déploiement des activités psychiques et est initié à cette belle science de la psycho-genèse, qui lui donnera des notions plus exactes de la naissance spontanée et du développement libre des fonctions de la conscience de l'enfant.

Cependant avant qu'il puisse y parvenir, il lui faut abandonner beaucoup de préjugés chéris et il aura à se défaire de plusieurs façons habituelles de raisonner, si hautement appréciées dans le monde scientifique, qui mettent obstacle à cette attitude sereine d'observation, qu'exige l'école Montessori.

Il aura même à supprimer pendant quelque temps ses tendances de psychologue scientifique. C'est alors seulement que le

psycho-gnosticien pourra se développer en lui. L'école Montessori lui sera alors une source d'expériences peu reconnues, d'expériences qui, dans les courants psychologiques actuels, n'ont pas encore trouvé l'appréciation générale.

Le gnosticien est celui qui obtient des connaissances à force d'en faire l'expérience lui-même et d'en éprouver lui-même les sensations. Le logicien au contraire tâche de fixer dans leurs rapports légaux ses expériences personnelles et celles d'autrui, sans que nécessairement il n'ait acquis ces expériences de la même façon que le gnosticien.

Le gnosticien a des connaissances directes, le psychologue des connaissances plutôt indirectes mais légales, des réalités psychiques.

On peut alors constater que ce qu'on appelle l'observation objective ne suffit pas dans l'école Montessori. Celui qui voudrait apprendre à connaître les réalités de cette méthode doit être capable en premier lieu d'éprouver intensément les expériences de l'âme enfantine, — faculté qui doit être délicate et objective, très consciente et à la fois maîtrisée, — faculté que Madame Montessori a caractérisée en l'appelant la „sensitivité émotionnelle" nécessaire.

Cette sensibilité sera pour l'observateur un guide excellent pour connaître l'âme de l'enfant. Mais un grand effort est exigé de l'observateur, effort qui, de quelques points de vues modifiera fondamentalement sa personnalité. On ne quitte pas la surface des phénomènes dans l'étude du problème Montessori quand on se laisse guider uniquement par la raison. Pour pénétrer dans les réalités cachées de cette méthode, l'observateur doit immoler sa personnalité entière, savoir en premier lieu ses qualités émotionnelles et intuitives supérieures.

Ce sont elles qui lui permettent de suivre et de s'assimiler au développement aussi bien de chaque enfant à part qu'au développement de l'unité sociale, que représente une classe d'école Montessori.

Par là il apprend à connaître dans leur premier stade les réalités psychiques les plus subtiles, qui sont d'une importance capitale pour notre société, mais qui jusqu'ici offrent de si grands

obstacles à celui qui voudrait les rendre compréhensibles à la raison sous la forme de figuration et d'une formule. Bref, il voit que l'école Montessori est enceinte d'une psychologie toute nouvelle, qui est non pas la connaissance formelle de quelques fonctions psychiques étudiées avec exactitude, mais une science, une faculté qui permet d'établir un contact profond et une action réciproque et intime entre l'observateur et ses sujets.

Nous arrivons ici à l'essence même de ces considérations et pour un moment nous nous tournons vers l'époque dans le développement des sciences psychologiques, où le professeur G. Heymans dans son fameux discours sur „l'Avenir de la Psychologie" (Discours rectoral, Groningue 1910) a traité de l'origine et la nature des grands maux psychiques de notre temps.

Après avoir examiné l'influence, qu'exerce sur notre vie spirituelle le développement rapide des sciences exactes, influence qui se manifeste dans un excès d'intellectualisme, et après avoir constaté combien la vie culturelle se compliquant avec une rapidité croissante, exerce une influence fortement déliante sur l'unité de la personnalité psychique, il résume en trois catégories les maux psychiques de notre temps (se basant sur un grand nombre de données fournies par l'expérience).

Les principales causes de la diminution du bonheur et de la joie de vivre des hommes de notre temps sont les suivantes : primo, les hommes sont devenus étrangers les uns aux autres ; seconde, l'homme se trouve dépaysé devant sa propre âme, et enfin il se trouve étranger devant le sens profond des choses. Il a perdu la conscience de son rapport avec le fond même de la vie. Or le cas remarquable se présente qu'on peut observer et constater combien une bonne éducation Montessori vient en aide à ces trois besoins fondamentaux de l'existence psychique de l'homme.

Sous nos yeux nous voyons sortir d'une classe Montessori une unité sociale en miniature, où se nouent toutes sortes de liens, qui diffèrent à beaucoup de points de vue des affections et aversions, qui naissent dans d'autres écoles.

Parmi ces enfants jeunes naît une certaine notion d'une es-

ponsabilité réciproque, la compréhension d'être liés les uns aux autres, un certain souci pour le bien d'autrui. Les enfants agissent et se trouvent les uns en face des autres comme s'ils étaient de vrais connaisseurs de caractère. Ce sentiment d'unité, né spontanément, se manifeste p.e. de la façon suivante : après la communication qu'un nouvel élève devait arriver le lendemain, l'un des élèves prépare, sans qu'on ne l'y pousse, la place qu'il occupera, un autre, craignant que le nouveau ne sût lire l'écriture des grands, recopie la poésie que l'institutrice avait déjà copiée pour lui. D'autre part on voit des enfants, dont les caractères ne s'accordent pas, s'éviter avec tact, se dérochant ainsi à des conflits évitables. Mais ce qui frappe le plus dans une classe d'école Montessori, c'est le grand empressement à être secourable. S'entr'aider est considéré comme la chose la plus simple et la plus naturelle qui soit. Celui qui a appris un peu plus qu'un autre, tâche d'aider ses condisciples. Point cette compétition habituelle pour avoir la note la plus élevée, on voit ici que le premier de la classe, c'est celui qui a su aider le plus. En effet une conception simple et naturelle du „meilleur élève”.

Ici nous voyons une possibilité existante et réalisable de diminuer l'éloignement entre les hommes.

Quant au second groupe d'influences détruisantes qui agissent sur notre vie morale, nous trouvons chez Heymans la représentation suivante : nous avons appris beaucoup et dans tous les domaines, notre lecture est étendue, nos connaissances sont multiples, mais peu approfondies et ce n'est que pour une petite fraction, que nous pouvons les utiliser ou rendre productives. Nous voudrions et désirerions faire beaucoup de choses, mais nous ne sommes capables que de peu. Nos envies et nos désirs se dispersent dans toutes les directions, mais il n'y a rien que nous désirions de tout notre cœur. Le pis est, qu'au premier abord cette dissolution intérieure a l'air d'être un épanouissement de vie spirituelle, qui plus tard au contraire se trouve conduire à un nivellement et au superficiel.

Celui qui même n'a fait que jeter un regard furtif dans la vie d'une école Montessori, sait que cette méthode, appliquée

pour développer les facultés psychiques de l'enfant, mène nécessairement à un résultat directement contraire à la triste image esquissée ci-dessus.

Chaque jour les enfants s'exercent à choisir avec certitude et justesse, choix qui correspond à un besoin éprouvé en eux-mêmes. Le plus ou moins de certitude avec laquelle ils choisissent chaque matin le matériel, qui représente pour eux à ce moment-là la seule chose qui pourrait satisfaire à leur besoin intérieur peut être considérée comme l'expression inconsciente de plus ou moins de connaissance d'eux-mêmes. Ceux qui ont la volonté faible et peu de cohérence dans le caractère feront ce choix sans certitude et se tromperont souvent. C'est justement pour ceux-là que cette exercice quotidienne a cette haute valeur psycho-paedeutique. Les élèves d'écoles Montessori se distinguent par leur caractère plus prononcé, par leur plus grande force de volonté et par une certaine conscience de ce qu'ils peuvent et de ce qu'ils ne peuvent pas.

Le mal de se trouver dépaycé devant sa propre âme trouve, par l'application continue des doctrines de Montessori, très peu de chance de se développer.

Nous en arrivons à la dernière catégorie, la plus difficile à traiter de toutes, c.à.d. celle où il s'agit d'établir notre attitude envers les problèmes fondamentaux de la vie.

Plusieurs observateurs ont déjà cru pouvoir établir que, vis à vis de ces questions, qu'elles soient de nature religieuse, éthique ou autre, l'élève de l'école Montessori se trouve pour ainsi dire intrinsèquement mieux outillé qu'un autre. Il a appris à traiter et à répondre d'une façon efficace aux questions et besoins, qui montent du fond de son âme. Les problèmes les plus fondamentaux qui puissent monter en l'homme, trouvent pour leur élaboration des facultés plus originales, plus fortes et plus cohérentes que celles formées sous l'influence d'autres méthodes, qui se proposent comme but, non pas le développement de ces facultés psychiques pour elles mêmes, mais plutôt l'acquisition de connaissances formelles.

Cependant nous ne voulons pas nous laisser entraîner jusqu'à prononcer dans cette question extrêmement délicate un jugement

prématuré. Toutefois nous pouvons affirmer, nous basant sur l'expérience, que l'école Montessori non seulement ne diminue pas, mais augmente incontestablement le bonheur et la joie de vivre chez les enfants.

Les élèves d'une classe d'école Montessori bien développée travaillent avec joie. Ils travaillent avec joie, parce que le travail est ici l'expression de leur vie intérieure qui se déploie. Comme un parfum doux cette joie vient à la rencontre de l'observateur délicat et sensitif lorsqu'il entre dans la classe. Souvent il peut la reconnaître dans cet indéfinissable sourire heureux de l'enfant perdu dans la contemplation de son travail terminé. Il retrouvera cette joie discrète mais profonde, chaque fois que l'enfant a fait des acquisitions spirituelles grâce à ses propres efforts. Peut-être qu'alors se révélera à lui le sens profond des paroles du mystique indien :

„An enigma unto yourselves you will be, until lowly and glad as a child you become" (Premanand Bharati. Revelations from Sree Krishna, the Lord of Love, pg 164).¹⁾

Que cette revue offre la place à l'élaboration intensive de ces perspectives si séduisantes.

Perspectives

by

Dr J. C. L. GODEFROY

Many a person interested in one of the many pedagogical periodicals already in existence may wonder, whether there is any justification for the foundation of a pedagogical-psychological journal, devoted to the promotion of the Montessori-method in particular.

¹⁾ „Vous serez une énigme pour vous-mêmes, jusqu'à ce que vous soyez humble et joyeux comme l'enfant".

Yet this apparent restriction of the general pedagogical movement is warranted for reasons of its own.

Most periodicals of this kind start from a different conception and display a distinct expansion in several directions, thus granting to all tendencies an opportunity of expressing themselves. Doubtless little objection would be raised to this idea, as long as educational tendencies of small extent and a limited sphere of application are concerned. But — the Montessori method has got beyond this stage. Its rapid spread in many countries, far distant one from another, has given rise to an urgent need for centralisation, for an organ, able to give guidance to all.

This in itself would justify the existence of a special journal, but there are besides other and deeper reasons, a few of which I should like to mention now.

In the history of culture, the Montessori-movement is a unique instance of an extraordinarily rapid development and expansion of a definite psychic attitude and system for the development of soul and mind in the younger generation.

This phenomenon can only be explained by realising that the Montessori-method touches a new chord in man, of which we have not hitherto been conscious, which has been latent in the heart of man and has only been waiting for the required stimulus to attain to full consciousness and to become a seemingly sudden and novel departure in education and in our own lives. Yet it is far from easy to define these new developments exactly and completely.

On examination, the supporters of Montessori appear to belong to all sorts and conditions of men.

Among them we find Christians as well as Hindoos, Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, radicals, socialists, and conservatives; Javanese, Chinese, Australians, and Europeans, all with their several racial characteristics. Asked what attracts them in the Montessori-method, these supporters generally point to the realisation of some of their own private ideals. Every one finds his own ideals represented and this pleads for the universality of the fundamentals of the Montessori-method.

If furthermore we consider to what extent and in how many respects these people differ from one another, we are bound to conclude that the Montessori idea appeals to quite general, fundamental functions in human consciousness, functions however, which do not strike the eye of the casual observer.

This vaguely known reality requires amplification and a prolonged and intense treatment of its own.

To this end it is necessary to start from the facts themselves, to observe these patiently during some years in those places, where nowadays the infant soul can freely develop its faculties and where we can watch the development not merely of the intellectual functions, but also the unrestrained unfolding of the more subtle aesthetic, emotional, and social phases of the child's character.

Possibly it will then appear, that in those Montessori schools a deep and intense contact with the real psychic life of the child and ultimately of every man can be obtained.

In doing so the observer experiences the birth and growth of the psychic faculties, and he is initiated for the first time into that wonderful science of the future: "psychogenesis", i. e. the birth and development of the various psychic functions. Before he is able to accomplish this, he will have to give up a great number of prejudices, habits of thought, and general notions, highly appreciated in the world of science. They have proved to be so many obstacles in the way of absolutely unprejudiced observation, as required in the Montessori school. For some time even he will have to cease being a "psychologist". Not till then can he develop into a "psycho-gnosticus".

Then he will find the Montessori school to be a fountain-head of experiences, little known up to the present, which in modern psychological schools have not yet been able to find full appreciation.

For a gnosticus is he, who knows by virtue of his own direct experience and by profoundly participating in the life experiences of others. The logician, on the other hand, strives to arrange his own experiences and those of others in their lawful connection,

without needing to obtain those experiences in the same way as the gnosticus. The psycho-gnosticus has more direct knowledge of the psychic realities, the psychologist however has a more indirect knowledge, formed by the laws of psychic life.

In a Montessori school so-called objective observation does not lead to satisfactory results.

It is required of any one, who wishes to know the actual realities of this method, to acquire the faculty of keen participation in the processes of the child's soul, which should be done in a manner highly sensitive and at the same time not coloured, highly conscious and yet controlled, all which Montessori has so characteristically designated as "emotional sensitivity".

For those who study in this manner, this "emotional sensitivity" will now appear to be a power of cognition of the first importance. This makes, however, a great demand upon the personality of the enquirer, which in many respects changes him radically. One remains only on the surface of phenomena if one follows the study of the Montessori problem upon purely intellectual lines; the enquirer only comes in touch with the inner and higher realities and possibilities of the Montessori method through the devotion of his full personality and especially of his finer higher emotional and intuitive qualities.

It is these which enable him to follow the development of character in each child as well as the development of the social whole in a Montessori class and to assimilate it himself.

Through this he learns to know in their first instance the finer psychic realities, which are of the highest importance in our social life, although up to the present, they offered great difficulties to every attempt to reduce them to a rationalistic form of representation and expression in arithmetical figures. In short, he sees, that the Montessori school is pregnant with a new psychology, which is not a formal acquaintance with single, accurately defined psychic functions, but a knowledge and a power of penetrating into the consciousness of others by mutual interaction.

This brings us to the pith of the matter in hand and now we

must turn for a moment to that period in the development of the psychological sciences, at which Professor G. Heymans in his famous discourse on "The future Age of Psychology" (Rectoral address: Groningen, 1910) treats of the origin and nature of the great soul needs of our time.

After tracing the influence which the rapidly developing natural sciences have exercised on our spiritual life, in the form of one-sided over-intellectualism and after determining the extent to which the quickly increasing complication of the life of culture has tended to decompose the unity of our psychic personality, he brought the spiritual needs of our time together (and he did so on the ground of a great number of experimental data) under three great categories.

The principal causes of the great lessening of happiness and joy in life of present-day humanity are as follows: firstly people are estranged from each other, secondly they are estranged from themselves, and finally they have lost touch with the foundation of things and have lost the idea of a connection with the background of life.

The very remarkable fact now presents itself that people can see and observe how a good Montessori education supplies these three requirements of the human spiritual existence.

We see how a Montessori class becomes a little social unit wherein all sorts of relations develop, which by no means consist only of the known, usual affections and aversions.

In these young children there develops a certain idea of responsibility for each other, an insight into their mutual dependence, and a certain care for each other. They deal with each other and oppose each other as if they really know each other's characters. This spontaneous existence of the idea of mutual bondage manifests itself f.i. in the following way: after the announcement that a new child will come into the class to morrow, one of the others spontaneously takes upon himself to prepare his place; another writes out once more a little poem that the teacher has transcribed for the new comer, because the little-child will not be able to read the writing of a grown-up person.

On the other hand one sees children who do not get on together, keep tactfully out of each other's way, thus avoiding unnecessary conflict. The most striking thing in a Montessori class is, however, the great mutual willingness to help; the helping of each other is here a natural and a usual thing. The one who knows a little more, helps the others and in place of the well-known competition for the highest mark, we find that the one, who is able to render most help to the others, is really the first in the class; a simple and very natural conception of "the best" truly.

Here we see a real, existing possibility of the lessening of the mutual alienation of human beings.

As for the second group of destructive influences on our spirit life, Heymans pictures these for us briefly as follows: we have learned much and multifariously, our reading is wide and our knowledge extensive, yet it is all so little thorough and it is only the merest trifle of this our knowledge we are able to make useful and productive. We will and we wish so much, yet are so incapable; our desires and aspirations are scattered in all directions and we do not long for anything with our whole soul. The worst feature of all is that this condition of inner dissolution appears, at the offset, to be an increased spiritual life, which later, however, seems to lead to a levelling down and to a shallowness of soul.

Those who are in the least acquainted with the working of a Montessori school know that this method of developing the psychic faculties of the child must in all respects lead to a result, directly opposite to the above-printed despondent picture.

Every day they get exercise in certainty and exactness of choice, which springs entirely from their own inner-felt needs. The measure of certainty with which they make their daily choice of material, which is for them the real inner necessity of the moment, is as it were the expression of their more or less conscious self-knowledge. Children of weak will and little inner coherence arrive at their choice with greater uncertainty and many mistakes. Yet it is just for these, that this daily

repeated exercise has such a great psychopaedeutic value. Montessori-children are distinguished by their more clearly outlined characters, their greater firmness of will, and a certain consciousness of what they can and cannot do.

The properly followed-out Montessori idea gives very few opportunities for the development of the evil of self-distrust and estrangement from oneself.

Now for the last and most difficult of all, viz. our attitude to the fundamental questions of life.

To tackle these questions, whether of a religious, an ethical or any other character, the Montessori child is as it were better equipped inwardly, than others. He has learned to handle and answer in a fundamental manner the questions and needs, which arise in him. The most fundamental of all questions which can arise in a person, thus find a psychic milieu of more original, more powerful, and more connected faculties for their working-out and answering, than can exist through a system of training, which concerns itself not so much with the development of these psychic elementary powers as with the obtaining of purely formal knowledge.

Thus, without allowing ourselves to be led into an expression of premature judgments with regard to this very difficult subject, this one at least can be pronounced with a certainty given by immediate proof: the Montessori school does not lessen but rather increases the life-happiness and joy of the children.

The children of a well conducted Montessori class work with pleasure. They put joy into their work, which is here an expression of their inner-developing life.

A sensitive observer scents as it were this silent joy of a whole class of children as a subtle and delicate odour, as soon as he enters the apartment, and he can often recognise it in the indescribable smile of the child, who sits absorbed in the contemplation of his well completed work.

Again and again will he encounter this not exuberant but deep joy, especially when the child through his own exertions has a spiritual gain to record.

Perhaps then the deeper meaning of the words of the Indian mystic become clearer to him :

"An enigma unto yourselves you will be, until lowly and glad as a child you become". (Premanand Bharati, Revelations from Sree Krishma, the Lord of Love. Page 164).

May these alluring perspectives find room for extensive treatment in the present periodical.

Introductory Note

by

Prof. Dr. GÉZA RÉVÉSZ.

Dr. Montessori has approached us with a view to our helping her in the conduct of this periodical.

We have gladly complied with her request, being convinced that the principles and fundamental ideas she has laid down in her works as well as a proper application of pedagogical methods are of the greatest importance in the training of children and teachers, as well as in the further development of the entire public educational system.

We do not hold that the proper development of youth depends only on one particular system, that its training can depend on one method to the exclusion of all others. "Many ways meet in one town". Hence we shall also discuss in our paper other schools, inspired by the same tendencies and applying similar methods, which work to some extent on the same lines. We are going to record their results for they also are weighty arguments in favour of a thorough revision of our present school system. The principal stress will, however, be laid on the doctrines inaugurated by Maria Montessori and our services will be devoted in the first place to their development.

To the question why we intend to bring this particular method to the fore, rather than try to unite into one whole the advan-

tages of the several methods aiming in the same direction, our answer is as follows:

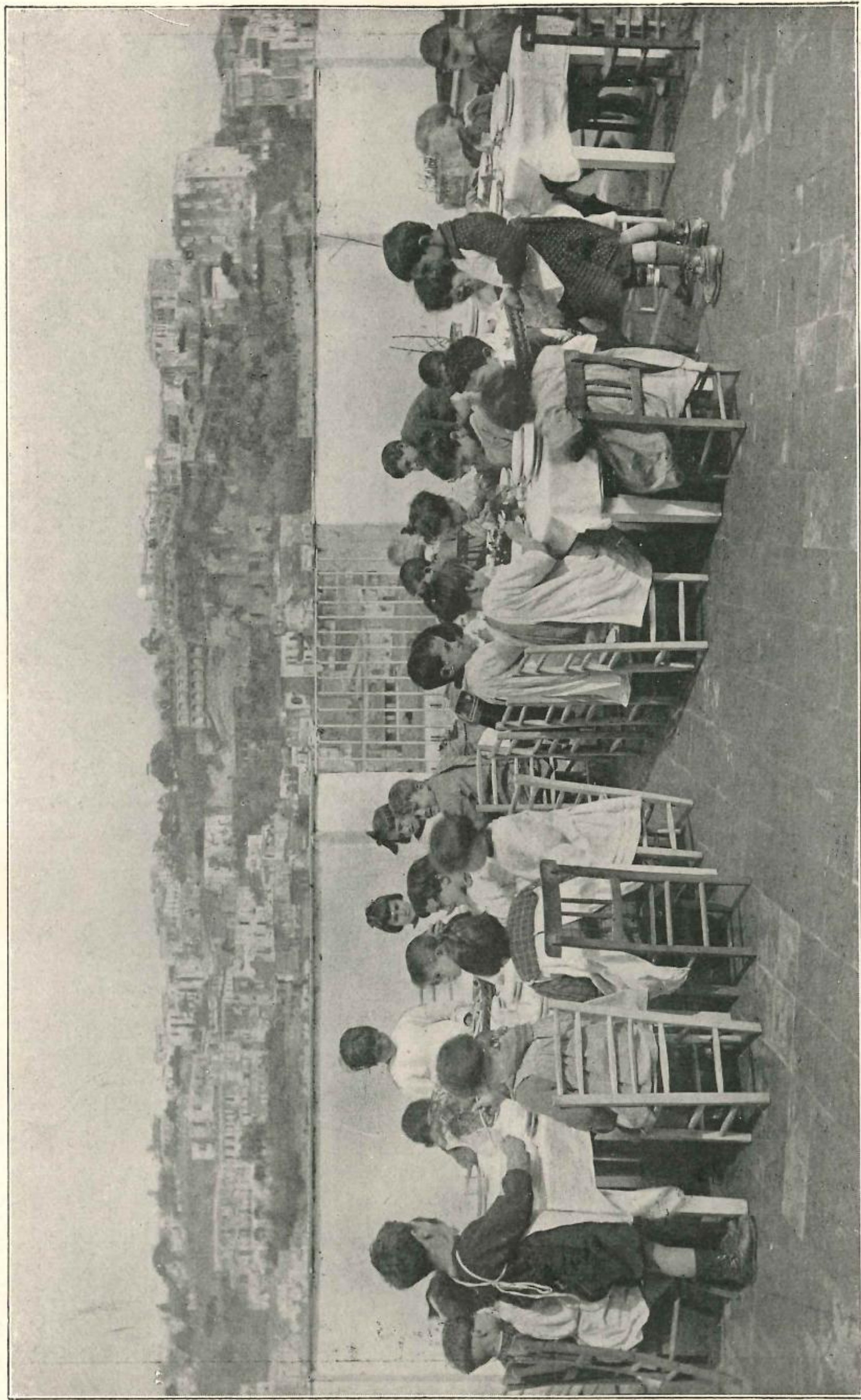
Objective and subjective considerations have convinced us that the principles of Dr. Montessori together with their practical application constitute one of the most noteworthy steps forward in the pedagogy of recent years. It does not consist of separate thoughts and proposals only, but it bases itself on energetic ideas, springing from an understanding of the child's soul. Dr. Montessori's system is essentially a connected structure, which indeed has subdivisions, but like the several features of one personality, they are intimately allied and can be understood only through their functions.

We do not deny that other new schools and tendencies, progressing along the same lines, will also gain successes; indeed we hope that in the course of time all these efforts, which are more or less capable of development, may be brought together. All the same we believe that for some time to come it will be more suitable for the several methods to develop and work independently, so that each can show the results it is able to produce.

It is impossible to judge of an edifice in the course of construction because it cannot demonstrate its fitness for the purpose for which it is being built. The same holds good for a pedagogical system, the success of which is moreover dependent on those persons, whose help has to be invoked.

There is another important circumstance of practical importance that should be borne in mind. A school, which has among its supporters eminent psychologists and pedagogues, acting as its teachers and advisers, can aim at a selection of what is right and appropriate from among all the recent ideas and methods.

To what extent such a combination of heterogeneous ideas is able to strike root, it is impossible to say at this juncture. Yet it cannot be denied that a strong personality may succeed in bringing this about. It is impossible to put this tendency into practice. We must see the several schools as they really are and functioning in their various ways. If we do this we shall



Exercises of practical life. Little waiter passing hot soup in a school in Naples.



Exercises for the chromatic sense: pairing of the colour tablets, putting them in gradation in a school near Berlin.

de naturele

come to the conclusion that it is impossible to leave every scholastic establishment free to make its own selection from the various principles and methods. The average teacher is not so well acquainted with the scientific postulations of the several pedagogical systems that he is able to form an objective opinion as to what is right. In general the schools are not equipped for independent experiments and as a rule they do not have at their disposal trained experimentators who can systematically test educational propositions.

They require a complete system, suggestive thoughts and methods of execution, and may even need concrete help and directions, if they are to feel at all safe in their activities. Within these limits, schools and teachers enjoy the greatest freedom in employing the methods, in applying them to the individual differences among their pupils, even in making a fuller interpretation of the system itself.

But they must have a firm basis on which they can rely in all circumstances whenever occasion requires. This can only be supplied by a proved system with clear ideas and guiding principles, springing from one particular school of thought. These they can certainly find in Montessori's system.

Primarily this periodical will aim at giving schools and parents the necessary hints and advice, at keeping them informed of the further development of the method, at drawing their attention to particular points in child-nature, which they may find useful in the education of their children.

We do not want to expatiate any further on this. Ours will be the task to preserve objectivity in the questions spoken of and we hope this paper will furnish plenty of arguments in its favour.

Introduction

Par

Prof. Dr. G. RÉVÉSZ.

Madame Montessori nous a priés de partager avec elle la rédaction de cette revue. C'est avec joie que nous nous sommes rendus à cet appel, étant convaincus que les principes et les idées qu'elle a exprimés dans ses oeuvres et l'application juste de sa méthode sont d'une importance capitale aussi bien pour l'éducation des enfants et la formation des maîtres que pour le développement de tout l'enseignement public.

Ce n'est pas que nous croyons que la prospérité de la jeunesse ne dépend que d'une tendance spéciale, ni sa formation d'une méthode. Plusieurs voies mènent au même but. C'est pourquoi nous avons l'intention de discuter dans notre revue aussi d'autres courants qui, animés du même esprit, appliquent des méthodes en partie identiques. Nous voulons communiquer leurs résultats, car justement ces résultats sont des arguments importants pour montrer la nécessité d'un renouvellement fondamental de nos systèmes scolaires. Cependant nous mettrons surtout en évidence la doctrine inaugurée par Madame Montessori et c'est au développement de cette doctrine que nous consacrerons en premier lieu notre travail.

Pour répondre d'avance à la question pourquoi nous donnons la préférence à cette méthode-là, pourquoi nous n'essayons pas de réunir dans une seule doctrine ce qui nous paraît avantageux dans les différents systèmes, nous dirons comme suit :

Des arguments objectifs et subjectifs nous ont donnés la conviction que non seulement les idées fondamentales de Madame Montessori mais également sa façon de procéder, constituent un pas remarquable dans l'effort pédagogique des derniers temps. Ce

ne sont pas des idées et des projets isolées, c'est une méthode fondée sur des idées empiétantes sur la compréhension de l'âme de l'enfant. En effet cette doctrine est comme un édifice qui, il est vrai, se compose de différents ailes, liées fortement entre eux, comme les traits d'un caractère, et qu'on ne peut comprendre que par rapport à ses fonctions.

Nous ne voulons pas nier que d'autres écoles et d'autres méthodes nouvelles qui s'avancent dans de semblables directions auront aussi du succès, nous espérons même que tous ces efforts qui méritent d'être élaborés, s'uniront un jour, mais nous croyons que dans les premiers stades de développement il est utile que chaque méthode se déploie librement et montre à quoi elle peut atteindre. Il en est d'une méthode pédagogique comme d'un édifice en construction: on ne peut en juger avant que savoir qu'il se prête au but pour lequel il est construit, d'autant plus que le succès d'une méthode dépend des personnes qui doivent la mettre en pratique.

Un autre élément d'ordre pratique ne doit pas être perdu de vue. Une école qui a à sa disposition des psychologues et des pédagogues excellants par leur réputation, et qui se trouvent sous leur direction immédiate, soit comme professeur, soit comme conseiller, une pareille école, dis-je, pourrait se proposer comme but de choisir parmi les différentes idées et méthodes nouvelles tout ce qu'elle croit juste et utile. Il ne s'agit pas ici d'établir jusqu'à quel point un pareil assemblage d'idées souvent hétérogènes peut être profitable. On ne saurait nier qu'une personnalité forte pourrait à la rigueur réussir dans une pareille entreprise. Or la pratique à montrer qu'une telle tendance ne peut être appliquée avec succès. Nous devons nous représenter les écoles isolées telles qu'elles sont. On arrive alors à conclure qu'on ne peut pas confier à chaque école à part le soin de faire le choix nécessaire entre les différents principes et les différentes méthodes. Le plus souvent les instituteurs n'ont pas des notions scientifiques assez profondes des différents systèmes pédagogiques pour qu'ils puissent choisir objectivement la bonne route. En général les écoles n'offrent pas l'occasion de faire

librement des expériences, et ne disposent pas d'expérimentateurs exercés qui pourraient contrôler systématiquement les méthodes appliquées.

Ces écoles ont besoin d'un système tout fait, d'idées directrices, de méthodes pour les exécuter, même de secours concrets et d'indications pour se sentir assurées dans leur travail. En dedans de ses limites les écoles et les maîtres jouissent d'une grande liberté dans l'application des méthodes, dans leur assimilation aux différences individuelles des écoles, même dans l'interprétation plus directe de la doctrine. Mais avant tout elles ont besoin d'une base solide sur laquelle elles peuvent s'appuyer en toutes circonstances et cette base ne saurait leur être fournie que par un système clair des indications générales, qui ont pris source dans un même monde d'idées. Une pareille base leur est fournie sans doute par la doctrine de Maria Montessori.

C'est à quoi la revue servira encore et avant tout, c'est à procurer aux écoles et aux parents les conseils nécessaires, à les renseigner sur le développement de la méthode, à attirer leur attention sur certaines particularités de la conduite des enfants, pour qu'ils puissent en profiter en élevant les enfants.

Nous ne voulons pas nous étendre plus longuement sur cette question. Il s'agit avant tout de conserver dans toutes les questions abordées l'objectivité absolue et nous espérons que la revue fournira assez d'occasions pour en faire preuve.

Why is the Montessori method a science?

by

CLAUDE A. CLAREMONT, B. Sc. (London).

In what way is scientific observation different from ordinary observation? The difference lies in the care taken to eliminate the possibility of error. To make a sweeping generalisa-

tion, the experimental methods of science consist in eliminating those factors, which, while being not essential, interfere with the aim of the experiments.

For example, if we wish to observe the reaction of two substances in a test-tube, we must be sure that the test-tube is clean. The presence of any unknown substance would cast a doubt upon the issue. The Montessori method is scientific because it conforms to this principle. We wish, for example, to study the child's psychology through his behaviour. We wish, in other words, to observe his activities, notice his reactions and his interests. But how can we be sure if a child's activity shows real interest, if his behaviour has been influenced in any way, for example, by rewards or punishments? These factors must clearly be eliminated if the real child is to appear. But abnormal behaviour could be caused by other conditions, e. g. hunger, ill-health, or by interference with the psychological activities necessary for his development. Hence these conditions must also be removed as a basis for child-study. We come to Dr. Montessori's conclusion. Only when the child is free, and the conditions of his life are satisfied, can we observe him without the possibility of error.

When, therefore, a child in the Montessori school is seen to concentrate for a long time upon one occupation, or in the use of a particular piece of apparatus, we can assert with confidence that this implies real interest on his part. Not only are there no influences that could account for this phenomenon other than the child's own tendencies, and the particular nature of the occupation, or object, in question; but there may even be counter-attractions, such as dancing or singing, that would undoubtedly claim his attention were this reaction not very profound. Now suppose our knowledge of physiology and psychology tells us that the activity we see is one of great educational value. We have made then a discovery. For, in the first place, the child is educating himself spontaneously. In the second, the occupation, or the piece of apparatus chosen, is seen to be suitable for this purpose. In the third place, we

have learnt something specific about the child's interests, or gained an insight into his psychology.

We have the genius of Dr. Montessori to thank for a number of initial experiments in this science. Her medical studies, her previous experience with defective children, her acute and almost intuitive power of observing little children simply and without preconceptions, enabled her, by a process of patient trial and error, to establish a child's environment containing carefully graded and experimentally determined "stimuli", which she found to provoke — not only in one or two children, but in all the children — profound educational reactions of this type. She found, in fact, that if suitable external conditions could be established, children would (and did) "educate themselves", — thus putting pedagogy upon a new footing.

Now, it results from the careful conditions of scientific experiment that the results of one observer can be verified by others. And this has now been done in many Montessori schools in different parts of the world. It follows that the reactions shown by the children towards the Montessori apparatus are fundamental human traits, and are therefore worthy to form the basis of a new child-psychology. It can also be shown very easily in practice that these results in the shape of the children's activity depend rigorously upon the nature of the material offered, and upon technical details in its mode of presentation. There are objects, that is, which provoke auto-education, and others which do not; while slight diviations, or errors, made by the teacher in introducing the child to them can greatly diminish his interest and consequent activities. The inference is irresistible. It is a question, as Dr. Montessori says, of corresponding to the child's needs. The more closely we do this, the greater is his self-educational activity. An environment, therefore, in which all the objects, as well as the teacher's pedagogical action, have this relationship to the child, comes in a way to represent, or to reflect, his psychology. Hence it can be by no means arbitrary. On the contrary, it should grow more and more detailed and exact as experience in the many

schools proceeds. For, beneath all individual variations, there are necessarily fundamentals common to every type of child. For example, all have senses, and a nervous system built upon the same lines. All must learn to read and write, employing in so doing the same mechanisms. And, undoubtedly, it is with these common factors that psychology as a science must concern itself. Pedagogically, we may say that having provided in the school for the common needs of all the children, we have given *to each* his fundamental requirements. Individual variations, which are very great, show themselves in practice less in the *kind* of occupations chosen, than in their *quantum*, their *order*, and in the applications which the child makes to his environment afterwards. Thus, some children will progress rapidly in number work before learning to write, and vice versa; some will prefer to write letters to their relations, others to do little compositions, etc. But in the long run, experiments such as that conducted by Dr. Montessori in Barcelona, and tests carried out in English schools by Dr. Kimmins, have shown that all the children pass at some time through all the fundamental stages. The absence of any marked off specialisation, up to the age of ten years, to which her experiments have so far been carried, may possibly be accounted for — as Dr. Montessori suggests — by the elementary nature of the studies in this period, which form, indeed, an essential basis for whatever walk in life the child is destined ultimately to adopt. Possibly, therefore, we shall see a more marked specialisation in later years, which will be an index to the child's future career. Such individual differences as do appear, however, can evidently be given full scope in such a complete environment as a well-equipped Montessori school, with its garden, pets, opportunity for creative work, etc. Their classification and range will no doubt form subjects for future exact research and enumeration.

Whenever we correspond with an individual's needs, we "set free" an activity that would otherwise have remained hidden. We have contributed to his freedom, in fact, in a much more

profound sense than that usually understood. Moreover, the child so assisted not only reveals a different character from that generally attributed to him, but, as a result of his auto-exercises, actually *becomes* different, manifesting in the following age-period different interest and reactions. We have, in fact, the child who is normally developing instead of the child who has been starved or hindered, and consequently retarded. Such help is a contribution both to pedagogy and to psychology, for it not only serves for the child's education, but also reveals him to us. It prepares the way, further, for subsequent research in the later age-periods. Hence we see why the development of such a system must start with the earliest years of the child's life, and can only work up from that basis. From the point of view of scientific method, therefore, we have an interesting and complicated process to record; the building up, step by step, first in one sphere and then in the other, of a complex system, which — speaking psycho-biologically — corresponds to human development and, — speaking-psychologically, — reveals it to us. At first sight it may seem unlike anything else existing in science. Yet it contains elements reminiscent of all the sciences.

In chemistry, for example, the discovery of one fact suggests further experiment revealing others, and each reaction, once established, remains a fixed and permanent feature of the whole structure. A similar thing may be said in physiology or medicine. We have a positive content of discovery gradually built up as the method is applied, and this, in turn, guides the subsequent progress of the research. The range of the investigation gradually widens, like the advance of an army debouching on a plain. More and more it becomes an affair of expert knowledge and of detail, as the minutiae of technique are established. But let us not falter at this, the more difficult side of our work. For it is here that we enter the lists of honour with other experimentalists; from this, indeed, our science derives the status that is theirs. What, indeed, distinguishes the great physician, or surgeon? It is not his power to generalise,

certainly not his power to write, or to talk; thorough insight into the intentions and aims, as well as an extensive and minute knowledge of technical detail, derived from personal and continued contact with human material. The pedagogist of the future will be almost entirely exact; as little likely to be found separated from his, or her, school as the doctor engaged in research work from the hospital. This, like every science, derives its grandeur from the humble daily pursuit of many inconsiderable things. And Dr. Montessori, like the other great originators of a new scientific departure, has broken a trail of which it is difficult to foresee the end.

L'Observation des tout-petits

par

Dr. MARIA MONTESSORI.

(Notes sur une conférence faite par Madame Dr. Montessori à son Cours international de préparation à Londres 1923).

Permettez-moi de vous donner quelques exemples d'où il résulte que les tout petits enfants ont une vie psychique dont nous ne tenons pas suffisamment compte. Il en ressortira que dans notre rôle d'éducateurs, il s'agit moins de satisfaire l'esprit de l'enfant que de l'aider à s'exprimer.

Les petits enfants cherchent à s'exprimer non seulement par la parole, mais de toutes sortes de manières; et, même avant qu'ils aient acquis la faculté de parler, une vie psychique manifeste s'est développée en eux, qui est d'une extrême importance.

Les premiers exemples ci-dessous montrent à toute évidence que le tout petit enfant possède déjà un esprit d'observation très accusé.

On montrait un jour à un enfant d'à peine deux ans, un livre rempli de belles illustrations. L'une d'elles représentait Jésus, entouré d'enfants. On donna une explication qu'on jugeait adaptée à son âge, et lorsqu'on la crut satisfaisante, on tourna la page. L'enfant dit: „dodo". Tout d'abord on ne prit point

garde à ce mot, mais alors l'enfant devint agité. Lorsqu'on reprit la page en question, on vit, en effet, que Jésus semblait avoir les yeux fermés, alors qu'il laissait tomber le regard sur les enfants. Par conséquent, ce fait avait attiré l'attention de l'enfant, indépendamment du commentaire de l'image.

Une autre fois, il vit sur une gravure l'échelle de Jacob. L'échelle et les ailes des anges attiraient surtout l'attention, alors que la figure de Jacob, qui était endormi dans un coin, s'apercevait à peine; à telle enseigne que celui qui donnait l'explication ne l'avait pas même nommé. Tandis qu'on tournait la page le bambin dit toutefois: „l'enfant dort” et il désigna du doigt le visage de Jacob.

Un jour une dame contait l'histoire „du négrillon Sambo” à quelques adultes, en présence du petit enfant. Le conte se termine à souhait: les tigres se disputent son petit costume bleu, cependant que le négrillon retourne chez lui. Mais le petit, qui avait écouté l'histoire dit alors: „pleurer” — On ne vit pas tout d'abord de rapport, mais comme personne ne le comprenait, il se fâcha et s'efforça de se faire comprendre sans y réussir. On amena le livre où se trouvait le conte, et on vit alors qu'il contenait encore une image, celle de la couverture: elle représentait un enfant en pleurs.

Un autre fait important consiste dans ce que les enfants de cet âge témoignent déjà d'un esprit d'association dans les idées. Quelqu'un montrait à cet enfant la reproduction de la Transfiguration sur la Montagne. Il dit: „petit lapin” et il prit entre les doigts un petit lapin de corail rouge, qu'il portait suspendu à son cou par une chaînette. Nous pensions d'abord qu'il n'avait pas prêté attention à la gravure, mais, comme il répétait son geste obstinément et se fâchait, nous considérâmes encore une fois attentivement celle-ci et nous découvrîmes alors, effectivement, dans un coin obscur, un enfant qui tenait un petit lapin dans ses bras.

Un autre jour, on lui amena simultanément un disque de gramophone et un petit mouchoir. Le lendemain il revit le mouchoir, il le regarda et dit: „musique”.

Comme il se promenait dans un bois, il trouva une pomme. Brusquement, il prononça le nom d'une bonne d'enfants qui était partie six mois auparavant et qu'il semblait avoir oubliée. Cette jeune fille s'était, paraît-il, souvent rendue avec lui dans un bois de sapins, et là lui avait découpé des pommes.

De la plus grande importance aussi, la mémoire topographique. Sur un rayon déterminé dans le bas de la bibliothèque d'un cabinet d'études, il y avait des livres avec des reproductions d'oiseaux. Un petit garçon et sa petite soeur étaient habitués à les y trouver toujours. A titre d'expérience, nous les remplaçâmes un jour par des livres non illustrés. Les enfants allèrent les chercher et lorsque nous leur racontâmes qu'ils ne contenaient pas d'images, ils ne voulurent pas nous croire, et continuèrent de feuilleter tout le livre, pour y chercher les oiseaux.

Autre exemple plus frappant encore : quand des petits enfants ont examiné un livre quelconque, ils se souviennent exactement de l'endroit où ils se trouvaient assis, de la chaise qu'ils occupaient, des personnes qui leur montraient les images, et, lorsqu'on veut leur faire voir le livre une nouvelle fois, il arrive souvent qu'ils tiennent à ce que toutes les circonstances soient identiques. Ils ont une mémoire très précise sur toutes sortes de choses et d'à-côtés avant même qu'ils puissent les exprimer en paroles. Un enfant qui ne savait point encore parler, assistait un jour à l'exposition d'une petite histoire, narrée à des enfants plus âgés. Personne ne songeait qu'il dût écouter, mais peu de temps après, lorsqu'il commençait à pouvoir s'exprimer verbalement, il donna un détail de cette histoire et exigea qu'on la lui racontât encore une fois, en manifestant une prédilection très marquée pour cette histoire-là.

Ils ont aussi une mémoire très fidèle quant à la chronologie des faits. On montrait une gravure représentant la Nativité du Christ. L'enfant dit : „eau", bien qu'aucune eau ne fût reproduite sur la gravure. Mais, à la page suivante, se trouvait la reproduction d'un baptême. Il se rappelait évidemment la succession des gravures.

A un moment donné du développement de l'enfant, la faculté

d'expression se fait au moyen de mouvements. Un enfant considérait depuis tout un temps quelques reproductions. Soudain, il se mit à danser et à sauter. En haut de la page se trouvait une image représentant des gens qui se livraient à la danse. Quelques instants après, il alla vers l'escalier et dit : homme — grimper — escalier. Dans un coin du livre une image représentait un homme gravissant un escalier. Alors il grimpa sur un fauteuil. „Homme — grimper — cheval". Il y avait aussi une gravure avec un homme à cheval.

Ces observations semblent indiquer clairement qu'il s'accomplit chez l'enfant un grand travail intérieur. Il s'exprime de son mieux, non seulement en paroles, mais encore par des mouvements ; et aussitôt qu'il a enrichi son vocabulaire de quelques mots nouveaux, il s'en sert pour exprimer une chose qui peut s'être produite avant même qu'il connût les mots adéquats. La perception chez lui est très intense, mais diffère de la nôtre. Par conséquent, notre rôle ne consiste pas à expliquer des faits à l'enfant, mais nous devons lui donner l'occasion de développer cet esprit d'observation dans les limites circonscrites de ses facultés.

Il n'est pas moins important d'observer que le développement intérieur de l'enfant correspond à un certain rythme. Les mouvements de sa vie intérieure se développent, en quelque sorte, circulairement et il est essentiel pour sa formation, qu'il les suive. Et, comme je l'ai fait remarquer ailleurs, il importe à l'enfant, pour qu'il puisse suivre la courbe rythmique de son activité, que son entourage présente une certaine stabilité. Cela est absolument fondamental. Il faut à l'enfant un entourage qui s'adapte d'une certaine façon à lui. Il peut se faire que nous nous mettions nous-mêmes au service de ses intentions, car pour rendre service à l'enfant nous devons lui donner les moyens dont il a besoin.

Voici, à ce propos, un bon exemple :

J'ai déjà noté, au cours d'une autre conférence, le besoin que ressent parfois l'enfant de déplacer simplement des objets d'un endroit à un autre. Pour ce genre d'activité, il faut toute-

fois des circonstances déterminées. Voici ce qui arriva un jour dans une chambre où, dans l'un des coins, quelques personnes exécutaient des exercices au son d'un piano. Dans le coin en question se trouvaient un sofa, deux fauteuils et une table. L'enfant était occupé à transporter sur la table des objets appartenant à une personne assise dans l'un des fauteuils et passait sans cesse devant une deuxième personne installée sur le sofa. Chaque fois qu'il passait, on eût dit qu'il recherchait l'approbation de cette personne, avant de poursuivre. Après un certain temps, cette personne se leva et s'éloigna. L'enfant ne s'en aperçut pas avant d'être arrivé à l'endroit où elle avait été assise, mais alors il regarda autour de lui, alla vers elle, la prit par la main et la força à se rasseoir, avant de continuer son manège.

Alors l'autre personne se leva pour voir ce qui allait se passer. Mais, rien à faire. Lorsqu'il arriva à sa place et s'aperçut de la chose, il voulut à toute force qu'elle s'assît. Elle s'exécuta, mais en prenant l'autre fauteuil. Cela le désorienta quelque peu mais il essaya de se rappeler, et dit alors : „Non, ce fauteuil-là". Lorsqu'on eut acquiescé à son désir, il continua de déplacer les objets jusqu'à ce que la „circonvolution intérieure" fût consommée.

C'est là un fait qui mérite notre attention spéciale : Les enfants nous ont souvent manifesté ce besoin (je pourrais presque dire un besoin spécial de cet âge) d'assigner aux personnes et aux choses qui les entourent, une place fixe, du moins pendant un certain temps.

Ceux qui ont suivi mon cours précédent à Londres se rappelleront sans doute cette fillette de 2½ ans qui, pendant que les autres marchaient sur la ligne et ne songeaient à autre chose, remarqua que tout avait été changé de place dans le local, chaises, craie, plantes etc. Elle quittait à chaque instant la ligne pour replacer quelque objet, puis regagnait sa place en courant. A une école à San Francisco, un bambin de deux ans à peine, veillait à ce que chaque objet gardât sa place dans un local entier. Parfois il était nécessaire de mettre tou-

tes les chaises contre le mur. Il y avait une grande chaise devant laquelle il semblait avoir un moment d'hésitation, alors, brusquement, il parut se souvenir, et il la remit à sa place.

Il semble qu'un enfant, pendant cette période de sa formation, a besoin de stabilité dans la place des choses qui l'entourent, pour s'en rendre nettement compte et pour pouvoir s'orienter. Un jour, la maîtresse de chant entra et après qu'elle eut, à la hâte, déposé son chapeau et son manteau sur une chaise, elle se mit au piano, pensant que les élèves, comme d'habitude, allaient venir. Mais un bébé de deux ans protesta: „Non, chapeau pas ici". Pour satisfaire l'enfant et aussi parce que le fait l'intéressait, elle lui demanda de lui indiquer le chemin. Pendant qu'elle le suivait vers le corridor, elle lui demanda si une chaise pouvait suffire. „Non porte-manteau" déclara-t-il nettement.

La nécessité d'assigner aux hommes et aux choses une place fixe peut être si impérieuse qu'elle entre en conflit avec d'autres sentiments et d'autres émotions.

Un enfant de 2½ ans savait que sa mère avait mal, tandis qu'elle était assise dans son fauteuil, et il essaya de la consoler, en lui donnant toutes sortes d'objets. Après un certain temps, la mère se retira et se mit au lit, parce que le mal empirait. L'enfant la suivit, en prenant part de tout son petit cœur à la douleur, mais lorsqu'il eut atteint le lit, il dit doucement: „maman-chaise" comme si deux fortes émotions l'assaillaient alternativement, son sentiment pour elle et son besoin de la revoir à son ancienne place, jusqu'à ce que son but serait atteint.

Encore un exemple, pour faire ressortir la disproportion entre l'intensité de la vie intérieure d'un enfant et l'extrême pauvreté de son vocabulaire. Un petit garçon mangeait des raisins, ayant appris à éloigner la peau et les grains. Tenant en l'air un grain il s'écria: „ballon". — On ne comprit pas ce qu'il voulait dire et il manifesta une certaine impatience.

Il ne suffit pas à l'enfant qu'il sache s'exprimer, il éprouve aussi le besoin d'être compris et de trouver de l'écho chez les autres. Il reprit le grain et le jeta en l'air, en disant:

„ballon". Il avait donc saisi la correspondance des formes.

A un autre moment nous l'entendîmes se plaindre, sa voix trahissant le désir, comme s'il s'efforçait de faire comprendre quelque chose sans en être capable. Tout ce que nous pûmes distiller, c'était le mot : œuf. Il n'y avait point d'œufs dans la chambre. La veille toutefois, il avait vu quelques enfants dessiner un ovale à l'aide des formes métalliques de mon matériel didactique. Nous pensions que c'était là sans doute l'objet de ses désirs. Mais lorsqu'on lui apporta la forme, il dit : „Non." Nous essayâmes de le satisfaire en lui montrant la figure de remplissage du milieu seule : „Non", dit-il encore. Alors la pièce d'encadrement. Avec plus de décision encore : „Non." Enfin nous dessinâmes la figure sur un morceau de papier, comme les enfants le font à l'école. L'enfant jubilait parce qu'on l'avait compris.

Le fait seul que toute cette activité intérieure : la mémoire, l'association, la perception, l'expression — a lieu, nous découvre une face importante de notre travail. L'enfant n'a pas besoin de nous pour observer ni pour s'exprimer, ni pour se rappeler quelque chose, etc.

La tâche de ceux qui l'entourent ne consiste pas à lui apprendre cela, mais à le seconder dans son développement ; à lui offrir des moyens peut-être adéquats à la formation de son esprit, mais en respectant toujours son activité spontanée. Laissons-le libre de parcourir les courbes circulaires de son développement, de suivre le rythme de sa vie intérieure et efforçons-nous de pénétrer et de comprendre ses besoins, ce qu'il cherche à exprimer. En réalité, la conscience qu'a l'enfant de ce que nous cherchons à le comprendre, aide au développement de sa vie intérieure. Ce dont il a besoin, ce n'est pas seulement de pouvoir s'exprimer, mais d'avoir des rapports avec ses semblables ; et cela même avant que le langage, le vrai moyen de communication de la vie sociale, vienne à son secours. Mettons-

nous au service de cette âme qui suit le processus de sa formation personnelle, sans craindre que, devenu adulte, l'enfant continue de se servir des mêmes moyens d'expression.

Ne reculons pas devant le souci hyperscrupuleux de l'enfant pour l'ordre, dans la crainte qu'il ne le rende plus tard tyrannique; qu'il suffise de rappeler que d'ordinaire, le sens de l'ordre ne préoccupe pas outre-mesure les adolescents. Nous devons croire simplement à ces forces et essayer, sans ergoter, d'aller au devant de ces besoins de l'enfant. Ce n'est pas en lui inculquant les facultés de l'adulte que nous l'aidons à devenir un homme, mais en le mettant à même de se parfaire selon la mesure du moment.

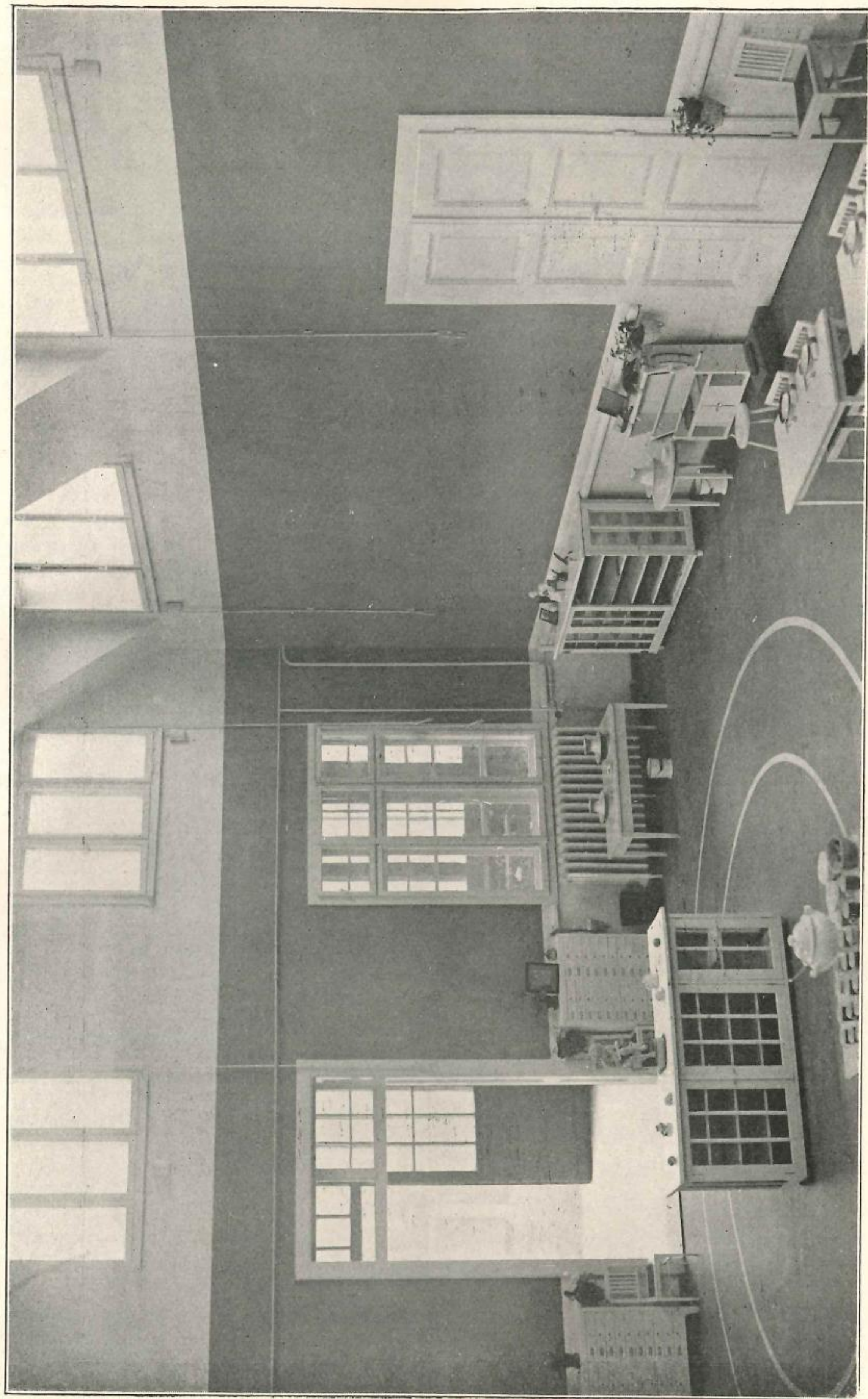
En donnant son lait à l'enfant au moment voulu, nous favorisons la croissance de ses dents à la période suivante. Et pas plus que la mère qui allaite son enfant, ne se creuse la tête en se demandant s'il aura des dents et s'il mangera plus tard comme un adulte, l'éducatrice n'a à se soucier de l'avenir. Elle doit se borner à se mettre au service de ces tendances, qui subiront d'elles-mêmes, quand le moment sera venu, leurs transformations.

Dr. Montessori's study of very little children.

Notes on a lecture delivered by Dr. Montessori during her International Training Course, London 1923.

Let me tell you some anecdotes which will show that even very little children have a psychic life which we do not take enough into consideration. They will show us, too, that our work as educators lies less in giving a content to the mind, than in helping the child to express himself. Little children tend to express themselves not only in language but in all ways accessible to them; and even before language has developed they have a marked psychic life, which is most important.

The first anecdotes show us that even the very little child has



Interior of a schoolroom ; Vienna.
Note the small washstands, cupboards etc.



Original watercolour drawing of 7 years old child. Barcelona, Spain.

a keen power of observation. A child not yet two years old was being shown a book of beautiful illustrations. One represented Jesus surrounded by children. Explanations considered suitable for his age were given, and when deemed sufficient the page was turned. The child said, "sleep". At first no attention was paid to this word, but the child grew agitated. On turning back the page, it was seen that the eyes of Jesus really appeared to be closed as he looked down upon the children. Hence independantly of the explanation the child's attention had been arrested by this fact.

Another time a picture was being shown of Jacob's Ladder. The stair and the angel's wings stood out brightly, while the figure of Jacob asleep in the darkness of a lower corner was hardly noticeable; so much so that he had not been mentioned in the explanations. As the page was turned, however, the little boy said, "Child asleep", and pointed to the figure of Jacob.

One day a lady was telling the story of "Little Black Sambo" to some other grown-ups, the little child being present. The story has a cheerful ending — tigers fight for his blue jacket while little Black Sambo returns home. But the child, who had been listening, said, "Cry." There seemed to be no connection, but not being understood he grew agitated, and was evidently trying to express himself, although without success. The book was found, and was seen to contain one more picture, a repetition of that on the cover, namely of a child crying.

Another interesting fact is that children so young as this should display a spontaneous association of ideas. This child was shown a picture of the Transfiguration. He said, "Rabbit", and held up a little coral rabbit he was wearing on a chain round his neck. We thought at first he had not paid attention to the picture, but his anxious repetition and excited manner made us look more closely, when we saw in a very dark corner the small figure of a child holding a rabbit. One day a gramophone record, and a little handkerchief, for him, arrived together. Next day he saw the handkerchief again, looked at it, and said, "music". Walking in a wood he once found a pine-cone. Sud-

denly he said the name of a nurse who had left seven months ago, and whom he had apparently forgotten. This nurse used to take him to a pinewood and open the cones for him. — Yet another fact of maximum interest is the memory of place. A certain shelf low down in the library contained books of bird-pictures. A little boy and his sister used to find them there. One day, by way of experiment, we substituted a book without illustrations. The children fetched it, and when we told them it contained no pictures, would not believe us, but insisted on turning all the pages to find the birds. Still more strange: if little children have been looking at a certain book, they remember the place they occupied, the chair they used, the persons who showed them the pictures; and on being shown the book again, they want all these conditions reproduced. Their memory of things, and of what took place, is very precise, even before they can express it in language. A child who could not yet speak was once present at a story told to older children. No one thought he was listening, but some time later, when he could speak a few words, he hinted at this story, and insisted on its being repeated in preference to any other. The memory of sequence is also distinct. A picture was shown, in a book, of the Nativity. The child said, "Water", although no water could be seen in the picture. But on the following page was a Baptism. Evidently he had remembered the sequence.

At a certain point of development comes the power of motor expression. A little child looked at some pictures for quite a long time. Suddenly he began to dance and jump. At the top of the page was a picture of some people dancing. A moment later, he went to the stair, and said, "Man — climb — stair." In the book was a picture of a man going up stairs. Then he mounted an arm-chair. "Man — climb — horse". There was a picture of a man on horse-back.

These observations seem to show that there are great inner workings in a child. He expresses himself as best he can, not only in words but also in movements; and as soon as he learns some words he uses them to express things which happened

even before he knew the words. He shows keen observation, but it is different from ours. Hence it is not for us to explain things to the child, but we should give him opportunities to observe according to his powers.

An observation of great interest is that something rhythmic characterises the child's inner development. The movements of his inner life go as it were in cycles, which it is important for him to follow for his development. And, as I have remarked elsewhere, the child, in order to carry out this rhythmic cycle of activity needs a certain fixity in his surroundings. This is very fundamental. The child needs an environment which corresponds to him in a particular way. It may even be necessary to lend ourselves to his purposes, for in order to serve the child we must give him the means he requires. A good illustration is the following. I have already mentioned in another lecture the child's interest in merely carrying objects from one place to another. Certain conditions are necessary for this activity to be seen. These events occurred in a large room, in a far corner of which other people were occupied in doing exercises accompanied by music played on the piano. In our corner was a sofa, and near it two arm-chairs and a table. The child was carrying objects from a person seated in one of the chairs to the table, passing as he went a second person seated on the sofa. Each time, as he passed, he came for approval to this person before continuing.

After a little this person rose and went away. The child did not notice till he reached the place she had occupied; but then he looked round, went to her, and taking her by the hand obliged her to sit again upon the sofa before he went on with his exercise. To see what would happen, the person in the arm-chair then stood up. But this would not do. When he reached her and saw it, he insisted on her being reseated. She sat down again but in the wrong chair. He looked puzzled, as if trying to remember, then said, "No, this chair." When satisfied, he continued carrying the objects till his "inner cycle" was completed.

Here is something very worthy of attention. The children

have often shown us this need, I might almost say a characteristic need at this age, of the persons or things about them remaining in definite positions for a certain length of time. Those who took my last course here in London, may remember a little girl of $2\frac{1}{2}$, who, while the others were marching on the line, and thinking only of that, noticed everything out of place in the room, the chairs, chalk, flowers, etc. which she kept leaving the line to replace, and then returning to her marching. At a school in San Francisco, a little child of hardly more than 2 kept the whole room in perfect order. Sometimes this necessitated putting all the chairs against the wall. There was one big chair as to which she hesitated a moment, then appeared to remember its particular place, and put it there. It seems as if the child, in this formative period, needs to have fixity in his surroundings in order to obtain a clear idea of them, and to find orientation.

The music teacher once came in, and hurriedly placing her cloak and hat on a chair, began playing, thinking the children would respond as usual. But a baby of two protested. "No. Hat not here." In order to content the child, and also out of interest, she asked him to lead her. Following to the corridor, she asked if a chair in the hall would do? "No, on the hooks!" he said with decision.

The need to have persons, or things, in a fixed place may even be so strong as to come into conflict with other feelings and emotions. A child of $2\frac{1}{2}$ knew that his mother was suffering as she sat in her arm-chair, and he tried to comfort her bringing her various things. After some time, the mother, growing worse, retired to bed. The child followed her affectionately, aware of her pain, but as he stood by the bed murmured, "Mother — chair", as though he were torn between two strong emotions, his feeling for her, and his need to have her in the same place, till he had finished what he was doing.

One last story, to show the discrepancy between the wealth of the child's inner life, and the small number of words at his command. A little boy was eating grapes, having learnt how to

remove the skin and the pips. Holding up a pip, he said, "Balloon." No one saw his meaning, and he became agitated. The child is not content to express himself, he needs to be understood, to feel the response of others. He took the pip and threw it in the air, saying, "Balloon." Hence he had observed the similarity in form. On another occasion we heard him complaining anxiously, as though trying to make people understand, but unable to do so. All we could catch was the word, "egg." There were no eggs in the room. The day before, however, he had seen some children draw the oval form with the metal inset of my material. We thought it might be this that he wanted. But when the pieces were brought, he said "No." We tried the centre portion only. "No." Then the frame. More emphatically, "No." Finally we drew the figure on a piece of paper, as the children do in class. The child laughed with joy at having been understood.

The fact of all this inner work — memory, association, observation, expression — surely shows us an important aspect of our work. He has no need of us to make him an observer, to express himself, to remember, etc. The mission of those near him is not to teach him these things, but to help him in his development; offering him, perhaps, adequate means to construct his mind, but all the while respecting his activities. Let us leave him free to complete his cycles of activity, to follow the rhythm of his inner life, trying with all our power to correspond with his needs and to understand what he is trying to express. His realisation of our effort to comprehend him, really helps the development of his inner life. He needs not only to express himself, but to commune with others; and this even before language, the real instrument of communication, comes to his aid. Let us lend ourselves to this soul which goes forward in its own construction, without fearing that the self-expression of the child will remain the self-expression of the adult. Let us not hesitate to serve the child in this his meticulous desire for order, for fear of becoming slaves to him later.

Enough to remember that order is not usually considered to have too large a place in the older child's life! We must believe in these powers; simply, and without elaborate reasonings, endeavour to meet his needs. *For it is not by trying to lead the child to have the characteristics of the adult, but by helping him to perfect himself in the given moment, that we enable him to become a better adult.* By giving him milk at the right period, we help him to develop teeth in the next period. And just as the mother who nourishes the child on milk, does not worry about his coming to have teeth and to eat like an adult, so the teacher need not trouble herself about the future; but only serve these tendencies which undergo transformation at the proper time.

A propos de la Composition chez les Enfants.

par

SIGN.^a A. MACCHERONI.

Les idées qui ont cours, en général, sur la question si importante de la composition chez les enfants, sont encore bien diffuses.

La composition n'est, en quelque sorte, autre chose que le langage écrit. Quand nous parlons, comme disait le Bourgeois-Gentilhomme, nous faisons de la prose. Cette prose nous sert à exprimer les pensées les plus usuelles de la vie journalière, et puisque la vie nous est si chère, et que nos sentiments, nos habitudes, notre toit familial, sont si intimement liés, il y a là tout un monde qui nous est familier et sur lequel se greffe la première conversation des enfants.

Il arrive que des enfants s'intéressent à décrire des scènes très communes, et qui écrites, ont pourtant paru charmantes. Voici la première composition d'une enfant de sept ans:

Lonny.

"Maman!" s'écrie la petite Lonny, qui a cinq ans. Pas de

réponse. "Maman!" s'écrie-t-elle alors plus fort. Puis une voix là-haut répond: "Oui, qu'y a-t-il, Lonny?" "Maman, est-ce que je puis éveiller petit frère?", Non, Lonny, laisse petit frère dormir encore un peu."

Lonny entre dans la chambre, prend son petit livre illustré, et regarde tranquillement les images, jusqu'à ce que Maman entre. "Lonny," dit Maman, "maintenant tu peux éveiller petit frère," "Ah!" s'écrie Lonny, et elle jette son petit livre par terre, traverse la chambre en courant, ouvre bruyamment la porte, si bien que petit frère s'éveille en pleurant. "Petit frère!" s'écrie Lonny. Petit frère geint: ga! . . . ga! . . . ga! . . . ga!

"Lonny, comme tu fais du bruit!" s'écrie Maman. "Je ne fais pas de bruit," répond Lonny.

La Rentrée de Papa.

Drelin, drelin, drelin! fait la sonnette. "Marie! ouvrez la porte!" "Oui, Madame!" Lonny entend des pas d'homme dans le corridor. "Lonny!" "Qui est-ce?" dit Lonny tout étonnée. "Je ne sais pas," dit Maman, en clignant de l'oeil à Marie. "Regarde un peu!" Lonny regarde — et s'écrie toute ravie: "Papa, papa!" et elle a à peine achevé ces mots, qu'une lettre est mise dans la boîte.

Monsieur Velken retire la lettre de la boîte, déchire l'enveloppe, et lit à haute voix:

19 avril 1923

Mon cher frère Jean,

Je voudrais te demander, si peut-être Lonny peut venir passer quelques semaines chez nous?

Car la petite Marie aimerait tant recevoir une petite visite. Ecris-moi vite si tu consens.

ta soeur affectionnée Rosa.

On peut donc considérer la composition comme une manifestation spontanée au même titre que l'écriture. Dans la méthode ordinaire, ce qu'on appelait l'enseignement de la composition consistait surtout à donner le contenu de la composition. Or, le contenu

doit être bien connu, afin que le langage se moule, pour ainsi dire, sur des idées bien claires. Nous sommes peu capables de parler bien de choses que nous ne connaissons qu'imparfaitement.

Il ne dépend pas de nous, d'être impressionnés par quelque fait qu'on nous raconte, ou par un tableau qu'on nous montre. Et quand nous ne le sommes pas, quand nous restons indifférents, nous n'avons à dire que des banalités et la langue n'a rien sur quoi s'appuyer, sur quoi mouler, par suite du manque de connaissances intimes, vivantes, de notre intelligence. Dans ce cas les enfants font des phrases sèches, courtes, entrecoupées. Ils font des efforts de bonne volonté, mais qui n'aboutissent qu'à témoigner leur impuissance. C'est un peu comme dans les cahiers d'écriture, où il y avait en haut de chaque page une belle écriture imprimée. Il fallait copier ces beaux caractères, mais les résultats étaient pauvres, car les petites mains n'étaient pas préparées.

* * *

La méthode Montessori donne une préparation excellente pour la composition. Peut-être la grammaire selon la méthode Montessori n'est-elle pas assez connue, ni assez bien comprise. Mais elle recèle tous les magnifiques problèmes de la liberté, d'une vraie liberté de l'intelligence, au milieu des boîtes de la grammaire,¹⁾ des ordres,²⁾ des phrases analysées et des lectures interprétées.

Il arrivait dans les toutes premières années de la méthode, que les petits enfants ne reçussent pas toujours une bonne direction des maîtresses encore inexpertes et désorientées dans leur nouveau rôle. Maintenant, au contraire, on entend dire: "Pour les petits c'est facile à comprendre, la Méthode, mais pour les grands enfants, c'est plus difficile." Oui, sans doute, nous sommes dans les premières années d'application de la méthode

¹⁾ M. Montessori, *Pédagogie Scientifique*, II. Education Elémentaire, pag. 215.

²⁾ Les "ordres" de la grammaire sont à la fois des leçons données par la maîtresse, et des exercices faits par les enfants. Ils consistent dans l'explication du sens des mots, et dans leur interprétation "pratique". Les enfants interprètent pratiquement le sens d'une ou plusieurs phrases écrites sur un billet qu'ils lisent.

élémentaire, peu de maîtresses ont pu avoir déjà des élèves ayant parcouru tous les stades de la méthode, et qui soient préparés dans une Casa dei Bambini. Souvent les maîtresses ont des enfants de six ou sept ans, qui ne savent pas même lire, qui n'ont eu aucune préparation. Même dans ce cas, on reconnaît les avantages du matériel élémentaire. Mais les maîtresses, qui ont eu des petits élèves préparés, ont pu obtenir des résultats qui ont une valeur toute particulière.

Avec les petites lettres découpées dans du carton (qui sont indiquées spécialement pour les exercices sur les suffixes, les préfixes, etc.) ils composent des petites phrases :

„Bonjour, Maman.

— Est-ce que tu vas sortir, est-ce que je puis t'accompagner?

— Il fait froid aujourd'hui, j'ai mis mon paletot d'hiver."

S'ils ont une table libre dans la classe, ils composent plusieurs phrases de suite sur le même sujet, ce qui est une vraie petite composition. Ils la laissent là pour la relire et après ils la copient. Sur des petits bouts de papier ils écrivent des phrases semblables. Ils copient aussi avec grand intérêt des petites poésies, des petits contes.

Cependant on remarque qu'ils font ces premières compositions d'une certaine étendue avec les petites lettres, et non pas en écrivant.

En même temps les ordres de la grammaire les ont intéressés; chaque matin ils reçoivent des mots nouveaux dans les ordres, pendant qu'ils travaillent aussi avec les „boîtes de la grammaire." Ce sont des études bien différentes mais qui se complètent l'une l'autre.

Les enfants se trouvent un jour à même de composer des „ordres". Ils les écrivent, et ce sont des compositions courtes, mais tout à fait exactes, c'est-à-dire que le choix des mots est bien fait et les phrases bien formées. Par exemple:

— Formez un rang, et montez l'escalier en marchant d'un pas ordinaire, et descendez en marchant lourdement. (premier ordre concernant „l'adverbe," composé par une enfant qui n'a pas encore six ans).

— Prends une fleur et mets-la délicatement par terre et puis ramasse-la et mets-la dans le vase. (premier ordre d'un enfant de six ans et demi).

La maîtresse donne une leçon sur l'accent prosodique.

Une enfant assiste à une petite scène dans la rue, dont elle est frappée à cause de l'accent de prosodie, et voici une autre composition:

— — —

„Quand je vais à l'école, je rencontre toujours dans la rue de Lairesse une enfant extrêmement colérique. Cette enfant a un petit chien. Elle est toujours accompagnée d'une dame. Je crois que celle-ci conduit l'enfant à l'école.

Un jour j'avais rencontré cette enfant, il y avait aussi le petit chien et, naturellement, la dame. Quelques enfants et moi, nous voulûmes caresser le chien, mais l'enfant se mit à pleurer; elle était furieuse, et elle jetait de hauts cris.

C'est ici que je veux montrer:

— — —

Elle s'écriait: "c'est mǒn chiǎn; c'est mǒn chiǎn! N'ǎ tǒuche pǎs; n'ǎ tǒuche pǎs!"

Plus tard, je l'ai rencontrée encore une fois avec Willy et Pans. „Regarde," chuchota Willy, „voilà encore cette bizarre d'enfant. Vois-tu? avec ce drôle de béret."

„Ah, oui," dis-je.

„Vois-tu?" dit Willy, „cette enfant au petit chien?"

Bien qu'elle eût parlé à voix basse, il semblait que la dame l'avait compris, car elle regarda avec des yeux menaçants, de sorte que nous eûmes peur et courûmes à l'école, où je me mis à écrire cette histoire."

Le choix des thèmes? Rien de plus délicat. Il sera déterminé en toute liberté par l'enfant lui-même, correspondra aux vibrations intimes de son âme, et sera suggéré par elle.

Par exemple, des dialogues divers sur des événements très familiers de chaque jour, ce qui représente le premier degré. L'enfant ne fait que recueillir les phrases qu'il entend et émet dans la journée.

Ne perdons point de vue que, quand il commence à composer des mots avec les lettres mobiles, l'enfant s'intéresse à la seule analyse phonétique du mot, et choisit les lettres correspondant à chaque son. On remarque qu'à ce moment l'enfant ne s'intéresse pas à la signification du mot, mais seulement au choix des lettres qui le composent.

Ce premier moment rappelle un peu les premières compositions auxquelles s'intéresse l'enfant, où il écrit ce qu'on dit, — ce qu'il dit, — sans avoir un thème déterminé. L'exemple suivant montre ce premier degré :

Nelly : Maman, j'aurai bien vite ma fête, n'est-ce pas ?

Mama : Oui, fais un peu une liste des choses que tu désires.

N. : Oui, je vais la faire maintenant. Est-ce que je puis avoir un crayon et un papier ?

M. : Voilà, mais fais-la clairement !

N. : Je vais l'écrire maintenant.

M. : Est-ce que je dois garnir ta chaise ?

N. : Mais oui, s'il te plaît ! C'est fini.

Maman lut : une poupée, un petit seau, une balle, une robe pour la poupée Enny, un filet de pêche.

N. : Quand Papa rentrera-t-il ?

M. : Il viendra tout de suite.

N. : Puis-je jouer dans la rue ?

M. : Oui, mais prends garde aux automobiles, aux bicyclettes et aux voitures.

N. : Maman, maman ! Voilà Papa !

M. : Nelly, ouvre la porte.

N. : Oui, maman.

Papa : Bonjour Maman, Nelly m'a dit qu'elle a fait une liste des choses qu'elle désire pour sa fête. Puis-je la lire ?

M. : La voilà.

P. : C'est cela.

N. : J'ai faim.

M. : Oui, mon enfant, va te laver les mains.

P. : Elle aura six ans, n'est-ce pas ?

M. : Oui.

N. : Maman, quand aurai-je ma fête ?

M. : Le 23 février.

P. : Viens Nelly, nous allons manger et quand tu auras fini tu pourras jouer de nouveau.

N. : J'ai fini.

M. : Nelly, tu peux jouer un peu avec tes poupées.

N. : Papa, quand irai-je à l'école ?

P. : Le lendemain de ta fête.

M. : Nelly, il est temps de te coucher ; je viendrai quand tu seras déshabillée.

P. : Maman, dis-moi ce qu'il faut choisir dans sa liste ?

M. : Oui, nous verrons, maintenant je veux aller un moment auprès d'elle.

M. : Elle dort comme une rose.

P. : Est-ce que je lui donnerai une poupée ?

M. : Oui, Nelly sera très contente ; et moi je ferai la robe pour la poupée.

P. : Il est bon qu'elle aille bientôt à l'école.

M. : Oui, mais je veux aller me coucher.

P. : Moi aussi.

Alors la maison devint parfaitement tranquille."

Un moment viendra, où les enfants écriront sur des faits déterminés, comme par exemple cette histoire, que l'enfant a inventé :

Les Fleurs.

. Ma mère aimait tant les fleurs ; elle aurait voulu en acheter, mais où pouvait-elle les chercher ? Dans notre petit village il y en avait très peu et celles qu'il y avait, étaient fanées et desséchées.

Maintenant ce serait la fête de maman . . !

Elle aimerait recevoir des fleurs . . . !

En avions-nous?

Non . . . !

Certain dimanche, je me trouvais dans le jardin, inoccupé.

Tout à coup, je regardais avec beaucoup d'attention une petite plante très jolie, que je n'avais pas encore vue, parce qu'il croissait peu de fleurs dans notre jardin. La petite plante avait des feuilletes d'un vert tendre, et au bout de la tige on voyait quatre petits boutons.

Comment cette petite plante était-elle venue là?

J'appelai Papa.

Il regarda la petite plante attentivement et me dit à l'oreille: "C'est une rose! Quand elle aura de belles fleurs le jour de la fête de Maman, nous la lui offrirons. Mais alors tu dois l'arroser chaque jour."

Puis il arrive que dans la classe se passe quelque chose d'extraordinaire. P.e. : une gentille souris blanche a des petits ; on les regarde chaque jour, on s'intéresse beaucoup à ces petits tout rouges et presque informés. On suit la petite famille, surtout la maman qui a tant de soins des petits ; il arrive qu'elle les prenne entre les dents pour les remettre en place s'ils se sont éloignés, etc. Le moment arrive qu'une enfant (de 8 ans) note par écrit ses observations. Par ex. :

"Comment les souris élèvent leurs petits.

Maintenant je vais vous raconter l'histoire d'une famille de souris, mes enfants ! Une famille de souris était composée d'une mère qui avait six petits, et ses petites souris avait aussi une tante. Elles demeuraient dans un grand réservoir de verre ; il y avait une petite caisse en bois dedans ; cette caisse contenait un peu de paille, et sur cette paille naquirent ces six toutes petites souris ! Mais maintenant commence proprement mon histoire.

Ecoutez !

Lorsque les petites souris naquirent, elles étaient rouges comme de petites saucisses. Elles naquirent un lundi, le 22 janvier. Quand elles eurent presque une semaine, elles étaient roses et

après une semaine et demie elles étaient blanches, car elles avaient de petits poils ; et maintenant commence la partie la plus intéressante de mon histoire. Lorsque nous vîmes voir les souris après deux semaines, elles avaient les yeux ouverts. Nous sortîmes les six souris de la caisse, et que fit la petite et bonne mère souris ? . . . elle sortait son petit museau hors de la caisse . . . le promenait sur le dos des petits, qui fourmillaient devant la caisse . . . en prenait un par le cou et le traînait dedans. Elle faisait ainsi avec toutes les autres, prenait l'une par la queue, l'autre par la patte, une troisième par le cou. Il est vrai que, de temps en temps, une petite était trop lourde, et alors elle la laissait tomber, mais enfin, elle les avait toutes dedans, bon gré, malgré.

Et savez-vous pourquoi elle faisait cela ? Comme nous prenions sans cesse les petites dans nos mains, la mère-souris fut un peu inquiète ; et c'est pourquoi elle les prenait toujours quand nous les avions mis hors de la caisse. . . .

Est-ce que ce n'était pas une mère-souris très fidèle ? Oui, cette mère-souris trouvait préférable que les petites ne sortent pas encore de la caisse, n'est-ce pas ?

Alors faisons de même !"

Questions and Answers

(Questions relating to the development of the Social life in the School)

Answered by Dr. M. MONTESSORI.

Question I.

If the children in a Montessori school work *individually* rather than *collectively*, how will they be able to prepare themselves for social life ?

Question II.

In Montessori schools the work is chosen by the pupil himself, who seeks the most interesting occupation and therefore the one

which is most agreeable to him. How can such a preparation fit him to take his place in social life, where duty imposes tasks not always pleasant, infact often quite contrary to the personal taste?

ANSWERS

Answer to question I.

Social life does not consist in a group of individuals remaining close together, side by side, nor in their advancing en masse under the guidance of a pastor like a flock of sheep or like a class of school children.

The social life of man is founded upon work, harmoniously organized and upon social virtues — and these are the attitudes which develop to an exceptional degree amongst our children. Constancy in their work, patience when having to wait, the power of adapting themselves to the innumerable circumstances which present themselves in their daily contact with each other, reciprocal helpfulness and so on are all exercises which represent a real and practical social life and which we see for the first time being organized amongst the children in a school. Infact, whereas schools used to be equipped only so as to accomodate children, seated passively side by side, who were expected to receive from the teacher (we might almost say in a parasitic manner), our schools on the contrary have an equipment which is adapted to all those forms of work, which are necessary in an active and independent little community.

The individual work in which the child is able to isolate himself and to concentrate, serves to perfect his individuality and the nearer man gets to perfection, the better is he able to associate harmoniously with others. A strong social movement cannot exist without prepared individuals, just as the members of an orchestra cannot play together harmoniously unless each individual has been thoroughly prepared by repeated exercise when alone.

Answer to question II.

He who struggles, overcoming difficulties though his task may not be a pleasant one, or in other words, he who sacrifices

himself must, above all, be strong. This question therefore presupposes a condition which is of fundamental importance: "*sine qua non*" — *to be strong*. The spontaneous exercises which the little children do in our schools, choosing the work which they like and remaining absorbed in it for a long time, in an atmosphere of calm, fortify them, and in this way they are, although indirectly, preparing themselves for the unpleasant eventualities of their future social life. In the same way, the child who is nourished during the first year of his life on milk alone is thus preparing to be able to eat different kinds of food later on. If infants' nourishment has been such as to permit a healthy and robust physical development then, the grown man will be strong enough to digest heavy food but not if he has been fed on heavy and unsuitable food as a child.

He who has acquired perfect equilibrium of his body, can bend to the right and to the left, and take difficult steps without falling. The acquisition of equilibrium therefore is a necessary preparation for difficult movements. The same is true in regard to the psychic life. The child who does spontaneous exercises which lead to a healthy mental equilibrium, will be able to adapt himself without losing his own individuality. Is it through illness and disease that we prepare ourselves to be strong? Did heroes prepare themselves gradually for acts of heroism from childhood on? No — their life is one great incognito as regards the future. That which must be prepared through the present, is strength, equilibrium and health. Those children who have gained inner strength in their work, and by exercising themselves, as men will be better able than we to adapt themselves to an effort which they do not find pleasant.

Moreover, and this is of far greater importance, they will be better able to find that path which leads to the agreeable or pleasant effort, if one can so call that effort which corresponds to the healthy and generous impulse of the full, rich life of the spirit. A better society will result from this liberated energy which bursts forth victoriously. Do we not feel sad and humiliated when we consider the weakness of our modern society, where edu-

cation leads the child into useless inertia and where the man is willing to waste his strength on petty and useless sacrifices? ¹⁾

Echos de nos écoles et de la famille.

A propos de „l'Observation des tout-petits”.

Le petit Corneille, âgé de deux ans, a pelé une mandarine. Il la donne à sa maman, afin qu'elle la sépare en quartiers et en élève les pépins. Lorsque la mandarine est mangée, Corneille en prend une seconde et la pèle aussi. Il ne la mange pas, mais la dépose sur le plateau et en prend une troisième qu'il pèle de même et qu'il met à côté de la précédente.

Tous les morceaux de pelure sont disposées au fur et à mesure sur son assiette, mais de telle façon que le côté orange seul apparaisse. Pas un point blanc à voir.

Le petit Corneille a préféré la „répétition de l'exercice” et la disposition des pelures, que de manger la mandarine, dont il raffole pourtant en temps ordinaire.

Un père.

Développement sensoriel.

Je me promène avec ma petite fille de quatre ans, qui visite depuis un an l'école Montessori. Un camion plein de sacs passe.

„Tiens” dit-elle „des sacs de pommes de terre”.

Pour contrôler sa remarque je lui dit: „Je crois plutôt que c'est du charbon”.

„Mais non, Maman, si c'était du charbon, ce qu'on voit derrière la toile ne serait pas si rond, le charbon est plus pointu, et les sacs seraient plus sales, du reste — j'ai senti l'odeur!”

La petite maîtresse Montessori.

Un jour mon petit garçon se plaint de ne pas pouvoir bou-

¹⁾ Questions are to be send to the Editorial Office (address: see inside cover).

tonner la jaquette de son pyama. Sa soeur de cinq ans s'approche de lui et je vois qu'elle va lui expliquer ce qu'il doit faire. Je m'attends à une histoire de ce genre : „Regarde, le petit bouton méchant ne veut pas passer par la petite porte. Passe petit bouton et je te donnerai quelque chose. Je le pousse doucement, doucement, et voilà, le gentil petit bouton y est !” Mais cela ne se passe pas ainsi.

La petite maîtresse se met devant son élève, dont elle fixe l'attention par un seul regard intense, disant simplement : „Regarde !” Puis, sans mot dire, rien que par trois petits mouvements habiles : ouverture de la boutonnière — passage du bouton — fermeture de la boutonnière, elle lui donne sa petite „leçon”.
Une mère.

International News of the Movement

and

Items of Interest.

One of the most important questions relating to the Montessori Movement is undoubtedly the one as to what she has achieved throughout the whole world since the opening of the first Casa dei Bambini in 1907.

The lack of any international Montessori organ, or organization, to enable or facilitate communication between Dr. Montessori and the schools, has rendered it hitherto a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain full and accurate data regarding the spreading of schools and the state of the Movement in the different countries.

We are now in a position, however, to report upon the International Movement and upon a very large number of Schools in *America*, *S. Africa*, *Australia*, *Asia* (China, Japan, Palestina, British India) and *Europe* (Bulgaria, Germany, England, France, Holland, Italy, Russia, Spain).

Surely these reports will carry the conviction that the Montessori Movement is spreading with extraordinary rapidity. One might even say that the world has seized upon it !

An inevitable consequence of this rapid and widespread growth of the Movement, however, is that in many Mont. schools the method followed is not purely Montessorian. And yet the very establishment of these schools, — in itself a proof that their founders and the parents who send their children to them are all open to the Montessori idea, — is of infinitely greater significance than the possible failure of a few, where the leader, in most cases owing to the lack of efficient training, was not equal to her task, or where the method was not understood or combined with other methods.

An efficient training, however, can be organized in different countries with the help of Dr. Montessori.

On the contrary the process of the mental spiritual growth of mankind till it is ripe enough to receive new truths is *not* dependent upon organization, nor can it be forced. When the times are sufficiently ripe, the new idea will be absorbed easily and rapidly.

When we look round us now, and see that prominent and gifted men, who devote their lives to the study and improvement of education and instruction, have come, after much labour and sacrifice to the establishment only of one or more schools which promulgate their methods, we shall realise that nothing short of a radical reform, upon an entirely *new* foundation, of our methods of education could give the impetus to this movement, which we now find crystallized in the hundreds of Mont. schools all over the world and the thousands of parents who are endeavouring to work out the Montessori ideas in the education of their children.

With a view, therefore, to making the various groups of Montessori workers in the different countries conversant with each others' work and efforts, in the hope that this may lead to the hitherto scattered energy being collected and combined into one great force capable of doing beneficial work in the future, we purpose giving in each number one or more articles upon the Movement in the different countries, in so far, and in such order, as they reach us from our fellow-workers abroad.

A Review of the Montessori Movement in England.

It is difficult for those who have been in close touch with the Montessori movement in this country to realise that it is scarcely more than ten years old. Yet, so it is; and when we take into consideration this fact, we cannot but marvel at the influence which its founder, Dr. Maria Montessori, has exerted upon the educational methods, not only of England, but of the world. Those who have sustained their enthusiasm, and continued to work along the pedagogical path opened by Dr Montessori, have been so absorbed in the new vistas which have appeared in the light of her discoveries, that they perhaps more than others, find it difficult to realise to-day that within the remembrance of us all there was a time not far removed when Dr Montessori's scientific principles were unknown, and when her influence had not begun to be felt. To-day, Dr Montessori's name, and the work for which she is so justly celebrated are known to every English teacher, to all students of social reform and to parents who realise that parenthood demands a study second to none in its intensity and sincerity.

Looking back to a period some ten years ago, we see that at this time there was a growing unrest and dissatisfaction with the common and accepted methods of education. In most other great fields, human thought and action had emerged from the sphere of conjecture, empiricism, and dispute, which is invariably the outcome of theories based upon mere personal opinion. But the schools were still dominated by the philosophical reflections of great personalities. A pedagogy based upon a real objective and scientific study was not in existence. Consciously, or unconsciously, this state of things was reflected in the criticisms of the accepted methods, and in the verdict upon the results which accrued from them. Without seeking to detract

in any way from the great work which Froebel did for the childhood of the world, it has to be admitted that his influence only remained in the infant schools of this country as a pedagogic sentiment, while in practice he had ceased to exist. Thoughtful teachers were stumbling along a path unlit by any ray of definite knowledge, striving to solve fundamental problems, problems of such difficulty as those of attention and fatigue. The psychology which was the outcome of reflections made very often in the seclusion of a study remote even from the sounds of childhood, while rendering no assistance to pedagogy in the classroom, only served further to depress the teacher striving to find other and more profitable means. Then, the name of the Italian woman doctor, who was not only criticizing established pedagogy, but constructing something to put in its place, reached England. Dr Montessori's book, "The Montessori Method", was received with profound interest and enthusiasm. It was felt at once by those who had been waiting for a new orientation that Dr. Montessori was going to answer their questions, and to point the way.

The years succeeding the publication of "The Montessori Method", years from 1912 onwards, were years of enthusiasm, of controversy, of ridicule, and of opposition. The movement which is associated with Dr. Montessori's work in the field of a veritable scientific pedagogy, thus repeated the experiences of all other sciences when they first emerged from the field of subjective philosophy to enter that of scientific observation and rigorous scientific experiment.

But notwithstanding ridicule and opposition, the interest was genuine and profound. When Dr Montessori gave her first International Course in Rome in 1913, many students went from England to learn directly from Dr Montessori the discoveries which she had made. At least once great educational authority, that of the London County Council, was sufficiently advanced to send a delegate to this course, in order to obtain first-hand knowledge of this new method of education. A Montessori Society was established in London which drew to itself, as

members, many persons interested in social reform, penal reform, reform of the home, as well as reform of the school. It was during the years following 1912 that people in England began to realise that Dr Montessori's methods were not modifications of existing methods, but a substitution of new methods, of a new point of view, and of a new point of departure. With more or less imperfect knowledge teachers began to put the new methods into practice, and with more or less success according to the degree of such knowledge. But in spite of all opposing circumstances, the method, its principles and application, continued steadily to advance, until in 1919, at the very urgent request of the teachers of this country, Dr Montessori held an International Course in London. The absorbing and acute interest felt in Dr Montessori's work may be judged when it is known that the applications to attend the course were greatly in excess of the places available. This was also the case when courses were held in London, in 1921, and in the summer of 1923.

During the years succeeding Dr Montessori's visit in 1919, it became evident that owing to the increased knowledge which was at the disposal of those interested in the movement, there would be further controversial discussions. They were of a different character from those of the earlier epoch, when Dr Montessori's methods of pedagogy were either violently rejected, or enthusiastically received. These later discussions ranged round the question whether the method was capable of modification to suit this country, or whether it should be applied exactly as laid down by Dr. Montessori herself. These discussions which animated the world of pedagogy in England, served to show where Dr. Montessori's work was understood, and where misconceptions existed. It is only fair to state that it is not surprising to find those who had been taught to view pedagogy in the light of a mere pronouncement from a certain acknowledged source, should feel justified in rejecting or modifying anything with which they did not immediately agree. It is only now becoming generally known that Dr. Montessori's methods are not the result of her opinion or predilections, but of her obser-

vation and experiment, and therefore can neither be dismissed or accepted on the mere ground of opinion or predilection.

Again, Dr. Montessori's visits to England in the years of 1919, 1921, and 1923, made it abundantly clear that there is no "short cut" to any particular result. If such results are to be obtained as have been indicated both in Dr Montessori's books, and in her lectures, then the teachers must be prepared to give the conditions which alone can bring about these results. This entails study and a personal reconstruction of the teachers themselves, and the lack of courage and energy to carry out this reconstruction has been the cause of some falling away, and of a sporadic and spurious substitution of so-called "individual methods". This latter is a clear proof that Dr Montessori's methods are to-day definitely accepted, but that not all those who believe have the courage to pursue the path, which, while leading to the goal, is sometimes a little difficult. These sporadic movements are one of the greatest proofs of the hold which Dr. Montessori's researches have upon the education of this country.

But alongside these derivative movements and deflections, there proceeds the unmistakeable establishment of equilibrium. This was never more evident than at the present day. The teachers of England are beginning to realise that the true test of the worth of those pedagogical principles laid down by Dr Montessori lies in the establishment of schools which shall approximate as nearly as possible to the conditions which she has stated are necessary to produce a given result. Such schools are now to be found in great numbers; where the environment and the teacher follow as closely as possible the principles which are the bases of the method. There is also evident another sign of progress. It is becoming generally understood that failure is due to wrong application of the method, and not to failure of the method itself. The Montessori School is in ever increasing demand, as is shown by the enquiries and requests which continue to pour in upon all sides.

The movement is now very widely diffused. There is the

parent Society of all Montessori Societies, the Society in London, and there are Montessori Societies in Birmingham, Northampton, Edinburgh and Glasgow. These are in direct touch with the founder herself. Their activities deal with the diffusion of a knowledge of the method, they serve to bind together those who are interested, and to collect information. One of the chief activities of all Montessori Societies is to propagate the method, doing all in their power to guard it from misconceptions and modification.

That the Montessori movement in this country is ever growing there is abundant manifestation. The influence which Dr. Montessori has exercised upon every department which has for its object the development of a higher and more perfect human being is far-reaching and profound. In common with all those who have touched the mainsprings of human life, she is responsible for many great and distant changes, both in thought and modes of action, which are not directly ascribed to her influence. The treatment and position of the child, as a member of the family, the school and the home, is very different from that of a dozen years ago, and such change is largely due to the influence of this great scientist's discoveries.

It is also interesting to note that the Montessori movement is not confined to those who are exclusively concerned with teaching in the schools. The movement attracts to itself individuals who ostensibly are interested in very diverse matters, but who in reality are concerned with one ultimate object, the perfection of the human being. It is only to be expected that the majority of those who are interested in the movement should be connected in some way with the education of the young, as with them lies the most fruitful field. But in her deep researches into the mainsprings of human action Dr. Montessori throws light upon so many problems that it may truthfully be said that all who are interested in human development have, at some time or other, claimed her as their exponent. This is due to the fact that Dr. Montessori's discoveries are vital and fundamental, based as they are upon the self-disclo-

sure of the human being, which her method renders possible.

The Montessori movement in England, then, is not only to be measured by the number of schools which exist, nor from a mere numerical calculation of members of Montessori Societies, but upon the deep and far-reaching influence which Dr Montessori's teachings have had upon English methods of education, and upon the social consideration of the status of the child. The influence and change which has been effected in so short a space of time is remarkable, and as the supply of thoroughly trained Montessori directresses steadily increases, there is a constantly growing demand for their services. It is already a sign of the times that to-day no teacher is considered to be properly equipped who has not more than a vague idea of Dr. Montessori's influence upon education. Indeed, so widespread is this influence that we have not only a movement which stands of necessity apart from that which remains outside, but a Montessori influence which has entered into the very fabric of education itself. And above all, if her researches are based on that scientific observation and experiment whose goal is the discovery of truth, unequivocal and sharply defined, then the movement is destined inevitably to spread.

"Magna est veritas, et praevalerebit."

L. H.

London.

Dr. Montessori — Hon. Doct. Litt.

On the 11th. December the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature was conferred by the University of Durham on Dr. Maria Montessori. Prof. J. Wight Duff, D. Litt., who made the presentation spoke in terms of high praise of this learned lady's great talents, and of how much she had done to gain an insight into the infant mind, in which he likened her efforts to those of other great thinkers, such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Fröbel. He alluded to her excellent work "*questa piccola infanzia*", and quoted Wordsworth's line: "Heaven lies about us in our

infancy". He concluded his speech with the assurance that the University, formerly bound by such close ties to the old Roman Empire, was proud to possess in Dr. Montessori a new link between this seat of learning and Rome.

After her short sojourn in the north of England, where she received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature, Dr. Maria Montessori returned to Amsterdam, where she is at present conducting a training course for teachers. The first meeting of this course bore a festive character. Dr. Montessori was addressed by Prof. K. Herman Bouman, who spoke of the personal courage and strength of mind required to break away from much that is out of date in pedagogy, and to establish this science upon a new basis of her own.

Prof. Guarnieri Romano, the Italian Consul at Amsterdam, also welcomed Dr. Montessori as a compatriot, and alluded to the growing interest taken in her method which is steadily gaining ground in Italy.

Dr. Montessori was also addressed on behalf of the members of the course and presented with a floral tribute.

Training Courses held by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1923.

A series of lectures, intended mainly for teachers, was given at Naples by Dr. Maria Montessori from November 1922 to March 1923.

The practical part of this course was conducted by Prof. Maria Fancello, Municipal Inspectress of the Montessori Instruction at Naples.

Further Dr. M. Montessori held her 11th. International Course in London, extending from 1st. April 1923 to the end of July. This course, like the previous ones, was attended by students from all parts of the world. In demonstrating the materials used and the self-practice for the students, Dr. Montessori was

Training Courses held by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1923 75

assisted by Signa. L. Egidi from Rome, Mrs. Bang, Mont. leader in London, and, during the first half of the course, by Mejuffrouw C. W. Tromp, Head of the Amsterdam Mont. School.

And now Dr. Montessori is giving a course of lectures at Amsterdam (from 1st. November 1923 to 15th. February 1924), which is attended by 134 persons, (six of whom come from abroad, viz. from Germany, Austria, Hungary and South Africa), which is certainly a proof of the very great interest evinced in Holland in the Montessori Method.

The practical part of the course is conducted by Miss A. McAlpine Pyle and Mejuffrouw C. W. Tromp. Several biologists and psychologists have been invited by Dr. Montessori to give addresses bearing upon the subjects treated by herself.

The lectures by Dr. Montessori and her scientific fellow-workers are delivered in the University at Amsterdam, and much helpful coöperation has been received from the side of the Municipality.

Further particulars regarding this course will be found in the Report upon the Movement in Holland in one of the following numbers.

Preface

To "TITANIA'S PALACE" by Dr. M. MONTESSORI.

I am personally grateful and "The Call of Education" is grateful to Sir Nevile Wilkinson for the article in which he describes Titania's Palace and for the illustrations which he permits us to insert.

This exquisite work of art is truly worthy of attracting the vague and wandering attention of the child, within its halo of the dimensions of a toy, but of miraculous magnificence, and to entertain it there, and there I am sure the children will find that the invisible Titania will escape and disappear, while they will feel within themselves, the man who has been uplifted and ennobled by the divine inspiration of art.

Salve, and thus I give the Roman greeting: Salve, to this corner stone of a new epoc for childhood.

Once upon a time there was, oh, children, and there still is, a person who did a great and beautiful work for you. He worked for years and years, seeking for all that is most beautiful in the world in order to offer you the perfume of poetry, the incense of inspiration, the gold of magnificence, in a doll's Palace, as the three Kings travelled for years and years in order to honour the divinity of the Child, with the most precious treasures which the world possessed.

"Titania's Palace"

by

MAJOR SIR NEVILE WILKINSON K. C. V. O.

(Inventor and Architect).

First exhibited in July of 1922, Titania's Palace has been so cordially received by all lovers of children, and the scheme it represents has made such an appeal to all, old or young, that the name has become almost a household word in all parts of the British Empire. The miniature building itself with its

Floors of Mosaic, walls of arabesque

And columns clustering in patrician splendour

seems not only to satisfy the craving of childhood for something concrete, which shall link the real to the imagined, but also gives the grown-up, whose heart is still young, a glimpse of some of the beauties which are only seen by those whose good fortune allows them to travel in many countries. "It seems", as one visitor remarked, "to make all ones best dreams come true".

But Titania's Palace is far more than a model, and in order to fully appreciate it one must clearly understand the object for which it was built.

Every English speaking child seems to have an innate affection for the dream country they call Fairyland, in which it requires

very little cultivation to produce a garden of fancy in which the strangest happenings seem true. Now the fancy of a child must inevitably influence its action to some extent, probably more than we realise; and it is to make good use of the subtle influence of fancy over action that the scheme culminating in Titania's Palace has been started.

For up to the present Fairyland has been nothing more than a dainty fancy, which does not lead to any definite action. Fairyland has been, if one may so describe it, static rather than dynamic. In order to weave the myriad threads of fancy, light as gossamer, into a rope which should be capable of drawing something, it was necessary to overcome three main difficulties.

Firstly, it was necessary to create some concrete object, which would appeal very strongly to a child's imagination, and would centralise the idea of Fairyland in their minds.

Secondly, an intelligible story must be woven round this centre in order that every child might understand its meaning.

Thirdly, some reward must be offered to those who, having lent their fancy to the furtherance of the scheme, have fulfilled the service asked of them by Fairyland.

Titania's Palace, a model built on the scale of one inch to one foot, or one twelfth of nature, serves as the concrete object of which we have spoken. It represents the home of the Royal family of Fairyland, and is full of miniature works of art collected from all parts of the world. No attempt has been made to represent the actual inhabitants, for it is felt that each child should people the building with fairy forms created from its own imagination.

Every effort has been made to decorate and embellish the State Rooms and the Private Apartments of the Palace in a way that will teach the child to admire rich colour harmonies and fine handicraft, whether in metal, marble or wood. The fact that the whole work is the outcome of one hand and brain insures that the general scheme shall be harmonious throughout.

This Palace is the centre from which the messages from Fairyland are broadcasted to the children who love Fairies;

telling them that there are crippled, neglected and unhappy children around them who need help. They are told too that Fairies cannot act directly, but only through the willing agency of humans. They are taught that they can turn the wireless messages from Fairyland into direct action, and thus the first step towards creating a dynamic force capable of doing good has been taken.

Having roused the desire in the child to carry out the wishes of the Fairy Queen, it was necessary to provide some practical outlet for goodwill towards the less fortunate children, particularly those who are crippled, sick or neglected. Here the written book comes to the aid of the Palace, and the volumes known as the Titania's Palace Series have been written, which show how the fairy wireless messages of pity may be turned to direct and beneficent action.

Each book contains a proclamation from the Fairy Queen, which tells that every human child who performs signal service to the crippled neglected or unhappy children of the human race shall thereby win the membership of "The Most Industrious Order of the Fairy Kiss", and wear the Badge, which confers the Freedom of Fairyland.

At the end of each book of the series is a perforated form, easily detachable, which is to be filled up by the candidate and sent to one of the affiliated societies, working for children, whose names appear upon it. The chosen society sets the child its task, and when it is successfully accomplished, the candidate receives the diploma and Badge of the Order, and is thenceforth admitted free to Titania's Palace.

This system has been found to work well in practice, and there are already many Rose-maidens and Companions of Queen Titania's Order, who form a kind of Guild of Chivalry among children, banded together to help their less fortunate companions, and thus carry out the wishes of their friends the Fairies.

It is obvious that if Titania's Palace, the outward and visible sign of the entire scheme, remained stationary in London, a great part of its usefulness would be lost: so the building, which

covers an area of over 63 square feet, has been built in sections, and so strongly, that it can travel without harm. It has already made a very successful trial tour in the West country, and has visited Salisbury, Bath and Bristol, being greeted in each town with the greatest enthusiasm.

Its wonderful success may be gauged by the fact that over one hundred thousand visitors paid for admission during the first twelve months of exhibition, and the affiliated societies benefited to the extent of two thousands pounds from entrance money alone. As a proof of the far reaching influence of the scheme as a whole, it is interesting to know that, of the last two children who obtained the Badge of the Order of the Fairy Kiss, one lives in Basutoland, and the other in Kenya Colony: while the last order for the three books of the Titania's Palace Series was received from Pietermaritzburg.

Now that it is understood that Titania's Palace is the centre of a system with infinite possibilities for expansion, and which may become a potent moral and educational influence among children, we may turn our attention to the design and construction of the building itself.

It was necessary to produce something more than what we generally call a dolls-house in order to arrest the attention of grown-ups, as well as to compete with the most extravagant fancies of childhood. The value of the contents was only limited by the capacity of the architect's purse: but the actual size was restricted, for it was essential that the Palace should travel with comparative ease, and therefore must not be greater in bulk than could be carried on an ordinary lorry.

The first plan was therefore drawn to represent a two storied building built round an open court, or patio. By this arrangement it is possible to see into every room equally well from the outside, for the outer walls are removed for exhibition purposes.

The whole building is 27 inches high and stands on a draped base, being so raised that a child can easily see into it. The material used is old mahogany, and the natural colour is preserved.

There are four State Rooms, which occupy the full height of the building, and twelve Private Apartments on two floors, besides an entrance hall with a double staircase and two landings.

The visitors to Fairyland are supposed to enter by the Hall of the Guilds, which forms the ante-room both to the Throne Room and the Hall of the Fairy Kiss, the Chancery of the Order.

It would be impossible to give a detailed description of the contents of even one of the State Rooms within the limits of this article, so we must confine ourselves to a glance at some of the principal works of art in each.

On entering the Hall of the Guilds the first object of interest is a miniature cannon of bronze gilt and iron, the work of Michael Mann, the famous Nuremberg craftsman, who worked at the end of the XVI Century. It is placed at the entrance to keep off any humans or others, who approach the throne of Her Iridescence Titania, Queen of All the Fairies, without the proper credentials. Even if they succeed in forcing their way past this first defence, they are met by the spears of the Pricker Guards, the queen's private "garde du corps". On a console table, which was found in Palermo, stand a solid gold bowl, enamelled and set with uncut diamonds, and an enamelled gold horse, both of which were obtained from Mandelay in 1886. In the story they naturally become the Bowl of the Wise Men of Gotham, and the mechanical horse ridden by the Persian Prince of fairytale. On the platform which leads into the great Throne Room there stands a wonderful specimen of renaissance Italian work of the early XVII century in amber and ivory; it was originally the base of a crucifix. In the Hall of the Fairy Kiss the most striking object is the tiny bronze dancing faun, an original, not a copy; Italian XVI century work. Above it, decorating the Minstrel Gallery, are four French classical figures of the XVII century. Two Ming bowls of the finest quality on lapis lazuli pedestals flank the dancing faun. The portrait of Queen Mary, which hangs over the silver doorway leading into the chapel, has a wonderful carved wood frame, which was one of the best examples of French woodcarving exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1900.



Titania's Palace.

"A model built on the scale of one inch to one foot, or one twelfth of nature",
and its inventor: Major Sir Nevile Wilkinson K. C. V. O.



Titania's Palace.

The Hall of the Fairy Kiss with silver doorway leading into the chapel.



The Chapel in Titania's Palace.

"There is an exceptionally fine group representing Our Saviour blessing little children, believed to be French work of the end of the XVII Century."



Titania's Palace.

The royal dining room, with its rare collection of tiny table glass.

The Chapel contains a reredos which was commenced twenty years ago, took more than four years to complete, and was the first piece of decoration undertaken for the building which was to become famous as Titania's Palace. There is also an exceptionally fine group representing Our Saviour blessing little children, believed to be French work of the end of the XVII Century. The altar is decorated with perfect copies of the Cross of Cong and the Ardagh Chalice, while the design of the mosaic ceiling is based on the Book of Kells: all Irish work of the X or XI Centuries.

The chapel communicates with Queen Titania's Boudoir through a secret panel, and the visitor now enters the portion of the building, which contains the Private Apartments, built on two floors.

In the Boudoir, as one would expect, are kept some of the most familiar treasures of Fairyland: notably the rose and tiger-lily, who talked to "Alice through the Looking-glass," the Crystal Tear, the Doria Lantern, and the ivory Spinning-wheel.

One of the favourite rooms is the royal dining room, with its rare collection of tiny table glass.

Leaving the Morning-room, with its exquisite Buddha in a red lacquer shrine, we enter the private entrance hall, through which the personal friends of Her Iridescence are privileged to pass. The arrangement of the double staircase is very happily contrived to give a feeling of space. Here on a table lies the visitors book, just the size of a postage stamp, which bears on the first page the autograph of Her Majesty The Queen.

On the right of the Hall are the Prince Consort Oberon's rooms: a comfortable study below, with a library of choice illustrated books, and a dressing room above adjoining the Queens Bedchamber.

The Fairy Queen has a penchant for yellow lacquer furniture of the Venetian style, and the architect has decorated her wardrobe and tall-boy in accordance with her wishes.

Across the landing we come to the Bath-room, and the passage which leads to the royal nurseries. For there are four Princesses and three Princes of Fairyland: Daphne, Pearl, Iris and Ruby

who represent the Fairies of the four elements, and Princes Zephyr, Noël and Crystal. The last named, the baby of Fairyland, has been most useful in attracting the younger members, and provides an excuse for the more domestic and human touches, such as the tiny perambulator with the butterfly and coronet badge of Her Iridescence daintily painted on the panels.

Their still remain the Princes' bedroom, Oberon's Museum and the great Throne Room to complete the tale. The last named is only partially decorated; but the museum is already full to overflowing with a collection of works of art of almost incredible minuteness, brought together from all parts of the world.

It is impossible to describe the colour harmonies and the almost uncanny sense of grandeur and spaciousness of many of the rooms. No doubt there are models of greater accuracy in detail and of greater beauty architecturally; but in criticising Titania's Palace it is only fair to remember that it is the work of a soldier, the fruit of his spare time, and that he had no training either in art or in architecture. The collection of tinycraft it contains was the fruit of nearly thirty years of collecting in many countries. It is also of interest to remember that the scheme of making Fairyland dynamic was evolved during the terrible years of the Irish trouble by one whose work lay in the centre of the disturbance: Dublin Castle itself. Here, amid the coming and going of armoured cars and the constant sound of rifle and revolver shots, was born the scheme for weaving together the fancies of childhood, and the innate love for Fairyland, into a Guild of Chivalry whose purpose is to help the Grippled, Unhappy and Neglected Children of the World.

The three books of the Titania's Palace Series are so closely linked up with the scheme as a whole, and its success depends so much on their popularity, that this article would not be complete without some mention of them.

It is difficult for the author to discuss his own work, and I shall leave any criticism of them to more competent hands: confining myself to describing their genesis and object.

During the troublous times in Ireland to which I have referred

it was my good fortune to persuade a little damsel of twelve to sit to me for her portrait, just for fun of course, for by no stretch of imagination can I be called a portrait painter! Titania's Palace was in course of construction at the time, for it was built in Dublin; but so far I had not worked out a satisfactory solution to the problems I have mentioned, particularly that of publicity.

As Miss Yvette sat patiently for her picture, I began a story, partly to beguile the time and partly to keep on her face and in her eyes the dreamy, far-away expression I was anxious to catch. From this story, told from day to day, I gradually collected a pile of manuscript: but it was not until a friend, to whom I had lent it, persuaded me to make the adventure, that I published it under the title of "Yvette in Italy and Titania's Palace", and it became part and parcel of my scheme to bring the messages from Fairyland to the children of earth.

The success of my first venture was such that I was emboldened to continue the story of Yvette in "Grey Fairy", and followed this second volume with the third and last, known as "Yvette in Venice and Titania's Palace". This last contains two of Mr. Sargent's finest watercolour drawings of Venice, and a drawing of the Porta della Carta by the late Colonel Goff.

The Dramatis Personae are the same through the whole story, the principals being the Painter and his two companions, Yvette and Marietta. The painter, without being pedantic, tries to interest the children in what is great in art and architecture, while at the same time rousing their interest in the welfare of the children with whom they come in contact during their travels. And these travels are so arranged that the most interesting parts of France and Italy are visited. But, to quote the review in *The Times*, "through this plain stuff of human charity fly to and fro shuttles of bright fantasies, aught and dreams. Another thread is the love of art, and especially some ideas about the right way to ground children in the love of the best".

But the aim and object of the series is perhaps best summed up in Queen Titania's Preface "to Yvette in Venice." "In my three

books", she tells us, "I have tried to show, that if you reverence the past, and do kind deeds in the present, you need have little fear of the future".

FOR ADVERTISING-SPACE
IN THIS JOURNAL APPLY
TO THE ADMINISTRATION



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
TO THE LORDS OF THE TREASURY